SERMONS,

BY

G. GREGORY, D.D. F.A.S.

Author of ESSAYS HISTORICAL and MORAL, &c.

To which are prefixed,

THOUGHTS on the COMPOSITION and DELIVERY of a SERMON.

In the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that by my voice I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue. 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

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TO

HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

My Lord,

IF, by the diſplay of extenſive or profound erudition, the following pages were calculated to attract the learned eye; or if, by their elegance and correctneſs, I might flatter myſelf that they could endure the delicate teſt of critical diſcernment; the propriety of inſcribing them to your Grace would be eaſily ſeen, and no apology would be required for the liberty I have taken. Circumſtanced, however, as I am, the only conſideration, which I can plead in my own favour, is, that this

publication is intended to promote the intereſts of that ſerious and rational ſcheme of piety, which your Grace has ever diſtinguiſhed by your patronage, and recommended by your example.

I am, my Lord,

With great reſpect,

Your Grace's

Moſt faithful ſervant,

Winkworth Buildings,
JAN. 1, 1789.

THE AUTHOR.

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THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

ON THE

COMPOSITION and DELIVERY

OF A

SERMON.

WHEN one, who is to appear as a culprit at the bar of the public, has the temerity to ſeat himſelf upon the bench, he ſeems voluntarily to provoke a ſevere inquiſition, and to be left without excuſe, ſhould he be found to violate thoſe laws by which he himſelf has preſumed to appreciate the merit of his contemporaries. There is another, and, I will confeſs, a ſtill ſtronger, objection to

prefatory diſſertations; and that is, that they are too frequently indirect apologies for the author's defects; or, the artful means of gratifying his vanity, by permitting him, without the appearance of open effrontery, to be the herald of his own commendation. I ſhall, however, be deterred by none of theſe conſiderations from what I conceive to be my duty. I ſhall therefore content myſelf, for the preſent, with diſclaiming, in general terms, every ſordid intention of the kind; and, without entering into the merits of the diſcourſes which are contained in this volume, or their connexion with this eſſay, I would wiſh to point the reader's attention to what appears of more immediate conſequence, the utility of the deſign, and the importance of the object.

I do not know any ſpecies of compoſition, which is more deſerving of critical attention than that which is appropriated to the pulpit; and I will add, that I do not know any which appears to want it more.

That

That it is from its nature liable to very great abuſes, and at no time ſince the apoſtolic age has been free from error, muſt be allowed by every perſon converſant in the literary hiſtory of the church; but, of late years, ſo depraved a taſte has been introduced by the love of novelty, and the admiſſion of illiterate perſons into holy orders, that the keeneſt inſpection of criticiſm is become neceſſary to reduce to order the extravagancies of pulpit empiriciſm. A few obſervations, therefore, having occurred to my recollection during the courſe of my labour in preparing the diſcourſes which follow for the preſs, and conceiving that this volume might probably be read by ſome of the younger clergy, as well as by a few of the religious part of the laity, I determined to embrace the opportunity of preſenting them to the public.

The utility of theſe remarks, however, may poſſibly not be altogether confined to one ſpecies of compoſition. What I have to advance, with reſpect to ſtyle in particu-

lar, will, I flatter myſelf, not be unacceptable to young writers in general: indeed, every attempt to refine the taſte, and to exerciſe the judgement, is generally found of advantage beyond the ſphere of its immediate intention.

As I do not pretend to exhibit a complete view of the ſubject, I have entitled this attempt, "Thoughts on the Compoſition and Delivery of a Sermon." But, as deſultory maxims or precepts are ſeldom of much uſe, I have endeavoured to reduce my ſentiments to ſome kind of order; and (after ſtating in general terms the RISE and PROGRESS of THIS SPECIES of ORATORY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH) the grand diviſions, which I mean to adopt, will be, the CHOICE OF A SUBJECT, the ARRANGEMENT, and the STYLE: to which I mean to add a few curſory obſervations reſpecting MANNER OF DELIVERY.*

I. OF

* The deſign of Chriſtian oratory (ſays St. Auguſtin) is either to inſtruct men in the truth, to refute their errors, or to perſuade them to the practice of virtue, and an abhorrence of vice. The firſt requires plain narration; the ſecond, ſtrength of argument and ratiocination; and the third, the

I. OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF PULPIT ORATORY.

IN the primitive church a cuſtom prevailed, which may be ultimately traced into the Jewiſh ;* though the time of its introduction into the latter is not very eaſily aſcertained. The biſhop or preſbyter, who read the portion of Scripture ſelected for the day, concluded that part of the ſervice with a general explanation of what had been read,

the art of moving the mind and affections. As the Chriſtian orator ſpeaks that only which is holy, juſt, and good, he endeavours to ſpeak in ſuch a manner, that he may be heard with underſtanding, with pleaſure, and with effect. — That he may be heard with underſtanding, he ſpeaks with plainneſs and perſpicuity, and a regard to the capacities and knowledge of his hearers; that he may be heard with pleaſure, he will pay ſuch attention to the common rules of eloquence, as to endeavour to ſpeak with acuteneſs, elegance, and ſtrength; and, that he may be heard with effect, he will labour to perſuade and to convince his auditors of the truth and importance of his doctrines.

Aug. de Doctrin. Chriſto, l. 4. c. 4.
Idem, l. 4. c. 15. Idem, l. 4. c. 5.
Idem, l. 4. c. 12.

* See LUKE iv. 16, 17. xx. 1. xxi. 37. JOHN viii. 20. ACTS xiii. 13.

and with earneſtly exhorting the audience to profit from the inſtructions, or to imitate the example, which had then been exhibited.* Theſe exhortations were brief and unadorned, and were ſometimes accompanied with other explications of Scripture, which were ſucceſſively delivered by thoſe of the ſociety, who declared themſelves under the peculiar influence of the Spirit; while their prophetic brethren, who were preſent in the aſſembly, decided upon the reſpect which was due to their authority.† It is probable that what at firſt conſiſted only of a few ſhort and perhaps unconnected ſentences would gradually, and by thoſe who poſſeſſed fluency of thought and facility of expreſſion, be made to aſſume a more regular form. Origen‡ was the firſt who introduced long explanatory diſcourſes into Chriſtian aſſemblies; and preaching in his time began to be formed upon the nice rules of Grecian eloquence.

* Juſtin. Apol. 2, p. 98.

† Moſheim, Cent. 1, Part 2, Chap. 4.

‡ Moſh. Cent. 3, Part 2, Chap. 4.

The

The great ſuperiority of theſe ſtudied and regular compoſitions over extempore effuſions ſoon excluded the latter almoſt entirely from the ſervice of the church, though at ſome periods we find them occaſionally reſorted to. Origen,* the great father of pulpit-oratory, at above ſixty years of age, and when by continued uſe and exerciſe he had acquired great facility both in compoſition and delivery, began to indulge himſelf in the practice of extempore oratory. The cuſtom, however, was not confined to him. Cyril and ſeveral of his contemporaries addreſſed their reſpective audiences in unprepared diſcourſes, which the diligence of the public notaries of the church has preſerved from oblivion: and many of the ſermons of Chryſoſtom, together with his celebrated diſcourſe upon his return from baniſhment, are proofs not only of the exiſtence of the cuſtom, but that extempore compoſitions are not neceſſarily deficient

* Euſeb. lib. 6. c. 36.

either in elegance or method. It is probable, however, that, at a time when nice and determined rules had been formed for pulpit-oratory, few would attempt extempore addreſſes, except upon ſudden and particular emergencies, and then they would be attempted by ſuch only as previous habits of ſtudy and recitation had peculiarly qualified for the practice. Of thoſe which have reached poſterity, we know that many, and probably the greater part, received the after-corrections of their reſpective authors.*

However diminutive and ſimple in its origin, preaching very ſoon came to be conſidered as a principal part of public worſhip. Sometimes two or three ſer-

* At the Reformation in England, many complaints were made of thoſe, who were licenſed to preach; and, that they might be able to juſtify themſelves, they began generally to write and read their ſermons: the manifeſt ſuperiority of this mode over extempore preaching has continued it in the church of England ever ſince. See BURNET's *Hiſt. Reform.* Vol. I. p. 317.

mons* were preached in the ſame aſſembly by the preſbyters and biſhops in ſucceſſion; and, when two or more biſhops happened to be preſent, it was uſual for them to preach after each other, reſerving the laſt place for the moſt eminent perſon. The ſermons upon theſe occaſions were neceſſarily ſhort, as the time limited for public worſhip was only two hours. It was probably upon ſome of theſe occaſions that the ſhort ſermons of St. Auguſtin were compoſed, many of which may be pronounced diſtinctly, and delivered in eight minutes, and a few in almoſt half that time.

The general regard which was paid to preaching, as a neceſſary part of public worſhip, is evident from its having formed a part of the diſcipline of every Chriſtian church, except that of Rome, in which, as Sozomen † informs us, at the time he

* Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. book 14. c. 4.

† Sozom. lib. 7. c. 19.

wrote

wrote no ſuch cuſtom exiſted. Sermons were however again introduced into that church by Leo, but again diſcontinued, till, after an interval of more than five hundred years, Pius V. once more made them a neceſſary part of public worſhip.

As the inſtitution of preaching commenced in the explication of Scripture, it ſtill retained, through the many revolutions of the public taſte, ſome reſpect to its origin; and, with a few exceptions, a portion of the ſacred writings always conſtituted the baſis of the diſcourſe;* though latterly it was reduced almoſt to the form of a motto, which had frequently but little connexion with the principal ſubject. From this ſtate of facts we may eaſily perceive the ſource of thoſe two modes of exhortation, which now prevail in the church: I mean the ſimply explanatory, and the didactic or eſſay ſtyle. Both have their particular uſes, and perhaps neither ought to be uniformly preferred.

* Some of the homilies of Chryſoſtom were preached without a text. CHRYS. *Hom. Poſt. Red.* 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. Melancthon heard a prieſt at Paris, who took his text from Ariſtotle's Ethics.

II. OF THE CHOICE OF A SUBJECT.

However cuſtom may have indulged the Chriſtian orator with reſpect to the modes in which he is to convey inſtruction, ſtill, in the choice of a ſubject, young preachers will do well to advert in general to the origin of the inſtitution; to conſider that its immediate deſign is the expoſition of Scripture. And, though I ſee no reaſon for excluding utterly from the pulpit thoſe diſcourſes, which treat of the virtues and vices in an abſtract and philoſophical manner; yet I confeſs, that ſermon, which follows the order of the text, appears more immediately conſiſtent with the deſign, and more correſpondent to the nature of the compoſition.

For the ſame reaſon, I am induced to prefer thoſe diſcourſes, which tend to remove the difficulties, and elucidate the obſcurities of the Scriptures. I do not wiſh to be underſtood, as recommending any tedious philological diſquiſitions, any laborious collations, or thoſe exerciſes, which are obviouſly only calculated for the cloſet.

It

It is difficult to command the attention of a common congregation, be the matter ever ſo plain and practical. It would therefore be ſcarcely leſs abſurd to introduce mathematical calculations than ſuch diſquiſitions as theſe.

I am ſtill more offended with thoſe preachers, who regularly pay their audience the unwelcome compliment of ſuppoſing their faith in continual danger of invaſion; and conceive it abſolutely neceſſary to be conſtantly inſiſting on the proofs of revelation. The perſons, to whom alone ſuch reaſoning can be of uſe, take care very ſeldom to throw themſelves in its way; and, as Swift remarks, can any thing be more abſurd, "than, for the ſake of "three or four fools, who are paſt grace, "to perplex the minds of well-diſpoſed "people with doubts, which probably "would never have otherwiſe come into "their minds?"

The church of GOD was never intended as a ſchool of ſpeculation, or a place to indulge

indulge the licentiouſneſs of fancy in doubtful diſputation. It is a wretched abuſe of time to bewilder our hearers in the nice diſtinctions of the ſchoolmen, in the explanation of myſteries, which perhaps are not to be explained, or which at leaſt require much previous ſtudy, and call for all the advantages of ſolitude, and of leiſure, to enable the mind to comprehend or to follow the tenour of the argument.* Let us leave to the cloſet, the doctrines of the incarnation, of the trinity, † of the free-will of man, of the final election or reprobation of mankind; for there alone I am convinced they can be ſtudied with attention or effect.

* "The minds of men, whether learned or ignorant, "generally avoid pain; and the learned have fatigue "enough in the ſtudy, without increaſing it at church."

CLAUDE *on Comp. of Ser.* c. 2.

† In an aſſembly of people profeſſing the doctrines of the church of England, it is not leſs impertinent to inſiſt on the proofs of the trinity than on thoſe concerning the exiſtence of a GOD.

But,

But, the moſt abſurd and uſeleſs of all diſcourſes are thoſe, which treat of queſtions abſolutely removed beyond the ſphere of our knowledge. Such are many ſermons concerning the manner of the divine exiſtence; the ſtate of the ſoul after death; the nature of the hypoſtatic union; the exiſtence, the number of the angels, and the means of their communication;* what would have been the ſtate of Adam if the fall had never taken place; and abundance of other topics, which can only ſerve to gratify an idle and viſionary humour of ſpeculation, and can anſwer no practical end whatever.

In this place it may not be improper to remark, that all fantaſtical applications of Scripture are carefully to be avoided. It is dangerous on any occaſion to depart from the plain track of common ſenſe; and there is no attempt at ingenuity ſo eaſy as that

* See ſeveral inſtances of this kind in Mr. ROBINSON's notes on M. *Claude*'s *Eſſay*.

which

which borders upon nonſenſe. Moſt of the French ſermons are of this kind. * There is one of Maſſillon upon the ſtory of the woman of Samaria, which will afford a tolerable ſpecimen. " I find here," ſays the preacher, " three reaſons for reſiſting " the grace of Chriſtianity: 1ſt, her ſta- " tion or condition; *How is it that thou,* " *being a Jew, aſkeſt drink of me, who am a* " *woman of Samaria?* 2d, the difficulty; " *the well is deep,* &c. 3d, the variety of

* Thoſe critics, whoſe complaiſance or whoſe indolence has induced them to take their opinion of Gallic eloquence from the critics of that nation, have raſhly aſſigned the preference to the oratory of the French pulpit. I have gone through the drudgery of peruſing all the moſt celebrated of their preachers; and I will not heſitate to declare, that, except a ſermon or two of Maſſillon, there are ſcarcely any which deſerve, I will not ſay to be compared with the Engliſh preachers, but to be read at all. They are in general written, indeed, in a ſtyle of animated rhetoric, but altogether in a bad taſte. They abound in points, antitheſes, and conceits. But, their great defect is a poverty of matter. It is difficult, through the maſs of words, to find any ideas at all; and, when you have found them, as Gratiano ſays, " they are not worth the ſearch."

" opinions;

" opinions; *our fathers worſhipped on this* " *mountain*, &c." The heads of the diſcourſe are extremely well choſen; but it is obvious, that the application of the text to them is mere trifling; a ſport of the fancy in oppoſition to every principle of reaſon, and contrary to that ſerioufneſs and reſpect, with which the word of GOD ought ever to be treated.

Laſtly. Unity and ſimplicity are in every caſe eſſential to perfection. A ſermon muſt have one determinate end and object; muſt be confined to the explaining of a ſingle doctrine, or the enforcing of ſome one virtue. An accumulation of thought always oppreſſes the human mind; and, where there are too many arguments or precepts, there is a great chance that none of them will be remembered. * Thoſe preachers, who attempt to crowd the whole duty of a

* " Propoſe one point in one diſcourſe, and ſtick to it; " a hearer never carries away more than one impreſſion."

PALEY's *Ordination Serm.*

man,

ſman, moral and religious, into a ſingle ſermon, can only be compared to their brethren of the laity, who pretend to cure all diſeaſes by a ſingle noſtrum. By thus attempting to give you every thing, they in fact give you nothing: and we find that, however they vary their texts, the ſermon is always the ſame; the ſame trite chain of general ſentiments, without any ſpecific or uſeful inſtruction whatever.

By recommending an attention to the origin of the inſtitution, I may ſeem to have inſinuated, that a long text is generally preferable to a ſhort one. I have however found it otherwiſe by experience, and have ſeldom known the former either uſeful or agreeable. A long text frequently involves ſuch a number of propoſitions as muſt effectually deſtroy the unity of a diſcourſe: beſides, that a text, when well-choſen, and not too long, will commonly be remembered, and of itſelf will make a diſtinct and uſeful impreſſion on the hearers.

The contrary error is, however, ſtill more reprehenſible. It is one of the mean artifices of barren genius, to ſurprize the audience with a text conſiſting of one or two words. I have heard of a perſon of this deſcription, who preached from the words "Jehovah Jireh," and another, from the monoſyllable "But."* Theſe are contemptible devices, more adapted to the moving theatre of the mountebank than to the pulpit, and can only ſerve to captivate the meaneſt and moſt ignorant of the vulgar.†

* He perhaps might juſtify himſelf upon the ſame principle with Dr. Eachard's divine, who made AND one of the heads of his diſcourſe, adding: "this word is but a parti-"cle, and a ſmall one: but ſmall things are not to be "deſpiſed: MATT. xviii. 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not* "*one of theſe* LITTLE *ones.*" *Contempt of the Clergy*, p. 82.

† "Never chooſe ſuch texts as have not a complete "ſenſe: for, only impertinent and fooliſh people will at-"tempt to preach from one or two words, which ſignify "nothing." CLAUDE, c. 1.

"Give me a ſerious preacher, (ſays Fenelon,) who "ſpeaks for my ſake, and not for his own."

III. OF ARRANGEMENT.

With reſpect to ARRANGEMENT, it will alſo be neceſſary to have ſome regard to what has been remarked concerning the origin of preaching. It is evident that, when a ſermon is explanatory or illuſtrative of Scripture, it ought to follow the order and ſpirit of the text. When it is not ſo, it muſt follow that order, which is dictated by ſound logic, and the laws of compoſition. There are ſome texts, which contain ſeveral members, or inferior propoſitions, ſuch is that of Micah vi. 8. "What is requi-" red of thee, O man, but to do juſtly, " and to love mercy, and to walk humbly " with thy GOD?" Such is that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. "Charity ſuffereth long, " and is kind; charity envieth not; cha-" rity vaunteth not itſelf," &c. and theſe naturally divide themſelves. Though I think young preachers ought to be cautioned rather to follow the order of the ſenſe than of the words. Again, there are

ſome texts, which as it were carry the preacher along with the courſe of the narrative: of this we have an example in Maſſillon's ſermon on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Some texts, according to the nature of the ſubject, will only admit of two diviſions, even when they ſeem to contain more parts or members: for inſtance, Biſhop Taylor's famous ſermon on Matt. xvi. 26. "What ſhall a "man profit, if he gain the whole world, "and loſe his own ſoul; or, what ſhall a "man give in exchange for his ſoul?" Here the preacher divides his ſermon into two parts; and firſt inquires into the value of the world, and how far a man may be profited by the poſſeſſion of it; and, ſecondly, he inquires into the nature and value of a ſoul, and the loſs to be ſuſtained in parting with it.*

There

* Sermons will perhaps admit of another claſſification. 1ſt. When the diſcourſe is altogether an explanation or elucidation of the text. 2d. When a practical application is to be drawn from the text. And, 3dly. When both theſe objects

There are, however, texts which contain only one ſimple propoſition. In this caſe, the ſermon aſſumes the form of an eſſay; and the judgement of the author muſt direct him to that arrangement, which appears moſt commodious. For inſtance, if the purpoſe of the diſcourſe be to recommend the practice of ſome moral virtue, the preacher may firſt ſtate its general utility to mankind; afterwards its neceſſity, according to the law of GOD; and, laſtly, he may enforce it in a particular addreſs to

jects are united: and I apprehend it will be found the moſt acceptable mode of preaching on doctrinal texts, or thoſe which require explanation, to endeavour, towards the cloſe of the diſcourſe, to draw ſome practical inference from it.

Vitringa's rules, for preaching on doctrinal texts, are: — "1ſt. State the doctrine clearly. 2d. Prove and illuſtrate "it by parallel texts; and, if poſſible, by reaſoning. 3d. "Vindicate it, if you think any of your auditors deny "it. 4th. Bring it home to the heart." ROBINSON's Claude, Vol. I. 402.

"The Sermons of the 3d century (ſays Mr. Robinſon) "are diviſible into three general parts. 1ſt. A ſhort in- "troduction. 2d. An expoſition of the text. And, laſt, "a moral exhortation ariſing out of the diſcuſſion." Ib.

his hearers, founded on the preceding arguments.

The ſermons of the laſt century in general conſiſted of too many diviſions. The hearers were bewildered in purſuing the arrangement of the preacher, and loſt the ſentiments while they were attending to the order of the diſcourſe. There are indeed ſome ſermons, which only deſerve the name of heads of an oration. The moderns have fallen into an oppoſite extreme, namely, a total neglect of order and method. Common ſenſe points out a middle courſe: it is obvious, that a few natural and eaſy diviſions aſſiſt the memory; while it is commonly perplexed and confuſed by too many.

Thus far as to the arrangement of ſermons in particular; but there is an arrangement, or order, of a general nature, which muſt be attended to in every compoſition; and is abſolutely neceſſary to be obſerved in thoſe diſcourſes, which are founded upon ſuch texts as contain a ſimple propoſition, and therefore treat of the virtues

or

or vices, or of the particular doctrines of religion in an abſtract manner, and without any regard to the literal order of the text. Perhaps the ſimpleſt diviſion is that of Ariſtotle,* into, the EXORDIUM, which introduces the ſpeaker and the ſubject; the PROPOSITION, which explains the deſign of the oration; the PROOF, or argument, which ſupports it; and the CONCLUSION, which applies it directly to the audience.

I. With reſpect to the EXORDIUM, or introduction, the firſt rule is, that it be very *clear*. For, as the intent of it is to prepare the minds of the hearers, if any thing abſtruſe or paradoxical occur, there will be ſome danger of alienating their minds in ſuch a manner, that they will probably not be able to recover their attention during the whole diſcourſe. For this reaſon, long ſentences ought to be avoided, as they are apt to perplex the underſtanding, as well as to fatigue the ear, and run the ſpeaker out of breath before he is properly entered upon his ſubject.

* Rhet. l. iii. c. 13.

In the ſecond place, an exordium ſhould always be cool, temperate, and modeſt. The exordium of Sterne to his ſermon on the houſe of mourning, — " That I deny," — is a paltry artifice, unworthy the imitation of any man of taſte or genius. Indeed I know no author ſo likely as Sterne to corrupt the ſtyle and taſte of his readers; all his writings are full of trick and affectation, (the very oppoſite of thoſe chaſte models of eloquence which antiquity has tranſmitted to us,) and are at beſt only calculated to excite the momentary admiration of the unthinking part of mankind.

Thirdly. It is remarked by Cicero, that a common-place exordium, ſuch as the following, " Happineſs is the great end and aim of all human purſuits," is generally a token of a barren genius, and has therefore a very ill effect. As the whole oration is neceſſarily confined within very narrow limits, that exordium, which leads moſt directly to the ſubject, is certainly to be preferred.

Fourthly,

Fourthly. An exordium ſhould be agreeable and eaſy. The pleaſing is abſolutely neceſſary to conciliate the good opinion of every audience.

Fifthly. I would recommend brevity as a particular excellence on the preſent occaſion. It was the uſual cuſtom of the old divines to introduce their diſcourſes by a long hiſtorical or explanatory exordium, ſetting forth the ſtate and circumſtances of the perſon to whom the text related, &c. &c. which was nothing more than retailing the hiſtory of the Bible, in language always inferior, and frequently very indifferent and homely: as our auditors, however, are not quite ſo patient, theſe tedious introductions are neceſſarily and properly laid aſide.*

I would

* Brevity, in every part of a compoſition deſigned for the pulpit, appears to have been at all times a conſiderable *deſideratum* with great numbers of the people. Frequent exhortations to hear patiently the word of GOD occur in the writings of the fathers, and various ſtratagems were uſed to detain

I would wiſh one point to be particularly adverted to in this place; and that is, that the eloquence of the pulpit is eſſentially different from that of political aſſemblies. In the latter it may be proper, and is probably ſometimes abſolutely neceſſary, to preface a motion or argument by ſome account of the ſpeaker and his motives. In the pulpit, there can be nothing ſo diſguſting, ſo impertinent, and ſo vulgar, as egotiſm. The preacher ſhould never appear himſelf, he is only the repreſentative of another; he comes to explain the word of GOD, and not to ſacrifice to his own vanity. The long introductions of Cicero or Demoſthenes are therefore not to be imitated by pulpit-orators.

detain their auditors till the cloſe of the ſervice, even ſo far as to lock the doors of the church and confine them. Theſe ingenious devices were enforced by eccleſiaſtical laws; and the 4th council of Carthage enacted, that thoſe who ſhewed a contempt for the diſcourſes of their teachers ſhould be excommunicated from the church. Cyprian Vit. Ceſar, c. 12. Conc. Carth. 4. Can. 24.

II. The neceſſity of acquainting the audience with the deſign of the ſpeaker is ſo obvious, that little need be urged on the ſubject of the PROPOSITIVE part of a diſcourſe. If any definitions of terms be required, (as may be the caſe, when the text is liable to be miſunderſtood, or when ſome material doctrine depends upon the interpretation of that paſſage of Scripture,) it will be proper to introduce them in this part; ſince, if deferred to the middle or the concluſion, they may chance to prove ſoporiferous. In truth, I do not know any thing more diſguſting than inſiſting too much on the definition of ſingle terms. M. Claude, who appears in general to have had very juſt notions of preaching, errs greatly againſt ſimplicity in this reſpect. In one of the outlines of ſermons, which he exhibits as models, from a ſingle expreſſion in the text, "Whoever will come "after me, let him deny himſelf, and take "up his croſs," he takes occaſion to introduce a long diſſertation on ſanctification,

another

another on affliction; and the plan of the diſcourſe, according to his arrangement, contains the ſubſtance of at leaſt four moderate ſermons.

III. The PROOFS, or argumentative part, muſt intirely depend upon the nature of the ſubject. There is an excellent collection of topics upon moral ſubjects in Ariſtotle's Rhetoric; but Biſhop Wilkins's Eccleſiaſtes, or Gift of Preaching, is one of the moſt ingenious books that I have ſeen for the aſſiſtance of young preachers.

I cannot paſs this opportunity without again recommending, in the ſtrongeſt terms, an attention to *unity*. Without this, a compoſition (if indeed it deſerve the name) can never be uſeful; and leaſt of all a compoſition which is to be heard, and not ſtudied. A good ſermon muſt have a ſingle object, the more ſimple the better; and every part of the diſcourſe muſt tend to impreſs this object forcibly on the mind. It is almoſt unneceſſary to add, that a judicious preacher will form a ſort of climax

in

in his reaſoning, and reſerve his moſt forcible arguments for the laſt. The argument ought alſo to be full and pointed. I have heard ſermons, in which, after the principal matter was cloſed, a tail, or codicil, containing ſomething not very eſſential to the ſubject, ſucceeded, which, like Pope's Alexandrine,

——— "dragg'd its ſlow length along."

There is a very good receipt for ſermon-making in M. Claude's Eſſay on that ſubject. I would even adviſe the unpractiſed ſtudent to adopt occaſionally ſome of his topics, and form them into ſermons, in the order which he has preſcribed; this exerciſe will tend to give him juſt notions of method, and a facility in arranging his ideas: and will not only be more improving, but more creditable than the uſual practice of tranſcribing printed ſermons.

Another practice, which I would recommend to young divines, is, before they ſit down to compoſe a ſermon, to read ſome

ſome of the beſt authors, who have treated of the ſame ſubject; to cloſe the books, and endeavour to throw the matter into that order, which appeared moſt perſpicuous and pleaſing. Reading different authors upon the ſubject will give a variety to their ideas; and, by writing without the books before them, the expreſſion will at leaſt be their own.

If, however, the young preacher be altogether diffident of his own powers; not willing to hazard original compoſition, and yet deſirous of improvement; let him take the ſubſtance of his diſcourſe from ſome approved commentary on the Scriptures, and occaſionally enliven the explication by ſome remarks of his own. Let him draw a few practical inferences at the concluſion; and this will not only improve him in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but will gradually exerciſe his judgement, and form his taſte for compoſition.

I muſt add, that moſt of the proofs, which Chriſtian preachers introduce, ought to

to be ſcriptural proofs. — If they preach morality, it muſt be the morality of the Goſpel. Unleſs a ſincere and fervent ſtrain of piety pervade the whole compoſition, it will not, nor indeed ought it to meet with general regard. The ſermons of Archbiſhop Secker are deſerving of high commendation in this reſpect; but the moſt perfect models are to be found in a volume lately publiſhed by an amiable and accompliſhed prelate of our church.

IV. The CONCLUSION of a ſermon ſhould not (indeed, conſidering the preſent length of diſcourſes, muſt not) be prolix. It ought in general to be practical; and it is obvious, that it requires a more animated ſtyle than any other part of the compoſition. I do not know a more uſeful form for a concluding addreſs, than that which conſiſts of a recapitulation of the principal matter of the ſermon; indeed, if the ſubject be not very plain and obvious, ſuch a concluſion is abſolutely neceſſary. It ſerves not only to recal all the uſeful and ſtriking

ſtriking paſſages to the minds of the audience, but gives them a clearer view of the whole than they would otherwiſe have, and impreſſes it on the memory.* Variety is however neceſſary; and, I confeſs, I do not know ſo great a blemiſh in Dr. Ogden's excellent ſermons, as a want of variety in their concluſions. If the peroration do not conſiſt of a recapitulation, it ought at leaſt to proceed naturally and regularly from the ſubject.

On the whole, it is practice only, which can impart facility and method in the arrangement of our ideas. Rules can only ſerve to reſtrain the irregularities of the imagination. It would be impoſſible, in

* It would not be eaſy for the popular preachers of the day to adopt this form, as their compoſitions are mere farragos, collected from all quarters of the globe, with no unity of ſubject, no regard to text, no expreſs object whatever in view. I ſpeak not of extempore preachers, ſince method is hardly to be expected from them: I ſpeak of thoſe who pretend to write, and would be thought very profound theologians.

ſuch

ſuch a diſſertation as the preſent, or indeed in any work of criticiſm, to furniſh thoughts or ſentiments. Since Mr. Addiſon recommended the practice, it is become very common among the clergy to preach from the ſermons of approved authors, either by abridging them, or ſometimes by tranſcribing them entire. The practice is, in my opinion, more for the benefit of the audience, than of the clergy themſelves, though the former are the only perſons likely to complain.* What perſon of common ſenſe, indeed, would not rather hear a ſermon of Sherlock, of Secker, of Porteus, or of Blair, than the trite and unconnected jargon, with which we are generally aſſailed by the moſt popular preach-

* This practice is ſo far from novel, that it is of conſiderable antiquity in the church. Auguſtin rather commended than blamed thoſe preachers, who, when conſcious of their own inability to compoſe well, availed themſelves of the performances of others. Aug. *Doctrin. Chriſt.* l. 4. c. 29.

ers * in the metropolis? If theſe men (whoſe voices are generally good, and whoſe manner, if not quite ſo affected, might be rather conciliating) would, in the room of their own bombaſt, favour their auditors with a good printed ſermon, they would find that they might in general paſs undetected, and their exhibitions would not be ſo uniformly diſguſting as they are to perſons of taſte and erudition.

The moſt formidable objection againſt the uſe of printed ſermons, is, that it re-

* I would not be underſtood as applying this or any other term to the diſparagement of any ſect or denomination of Chriſtians whatever. I truſt a due conſideration of the abſtruſe and difficult nature of thoſe doctrinal points, which have been the objects of controverſy in the Chriſtian world, has taught me to treat with candour and indulgence the opinions of other men, or rather to requeſt their candour and indulgence towards mine. There are quack-preachers of every denomination, Socinian and Calviniſt, Arian and Arminian. The doctrines and myſteries of religion ſhould always be treated with reverence and reſpect, however differently thought of by different perſons. Mock pathos, unconnected matter, jargon, and buffoonery, are human concerns, and are deſerving of cenſure, wherever they are found to predominate.

moves

moves the younger clergy out of the way of improvement, and probably produces a habit of indolence. When, however, they do not compoſe their own diſcourſes, I would adviſe them to apply to approved authors, rather than to obſcure or indifferent writers, as is frequently done to avoid diſcovery. It is much better to be ſometimes detected, than to tire an audience by continually preaching indifferent matter: and the obſervation is but too true, that, where there is not genius to compoſe, there is ſeldom judgement to ſelect.

IV. OF STYLE.

The third object, which I propoſed to treat of in this diſſertation, is STYLE. I muſt however premiſe, that in the compoſitions for the pulpit, as well as in every other, unleſs there be a ground-work of good ſenſe and argument, unleſs there be ſolidity of reaſoning and energy of ſentiment, all the graces of ſtyle will be accumulated in vain.

The eſſentials of a good ſtyle, at leaſt as far as regards the preſent ſubject, may be reduced to three: PERSPICUITY, PURITY, and a moderate portion of ORNAMENT.

I. PERSPICUITY is the firſt excellence of ſtyle: indeed I do not know ſo deciſive a proof of genius. A ſmooth and poliſhed diction, or pompous figures, are frequently the atchievements of Dulneſs; but it is the characteriſtic of Genius alone to flaſh conviction and inſtruction on the minds of the audience.* Perſpicuity will depend, in the firſt place, on the *choice of words*; and, ſecondly, on the *arrangement of them.*

As far as regards the *choice of words*, obſcurity reſults, in the firſt place,

From obſolete or affected language, which is not generally underſtood. No perſon of taſte would wiſh at preſent to imitate the language of our liturgy in the

* "By perſpicuity, (ſays Quinctilian,) care is taken, "not that the hearer may underſtand, if he will; but, "that he muſt underſtand, whether he will or not."

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uſe of the word *prevent*, — " Prevent us, " O Lord, in all our doings; nor in that of the word *after*, —" O Lord, reward us " not after our iniquities." Many abuſes of words have been introduced from the French idiom: Lord Bolingbroke, for inſtance, ſays, " by the perſons I *intend* " here," inſtead of I *mean*.—Analogous to this is the uſe of Latiniſms, as *integrity* to denote *entireneſs*, *conſcience* for *conſciouſneſs*: " The *conſcience* of approving one's ſelf a " benefactor to mankind is the nobleſt re- " compenſe for being ſo."*

Again, obſcurity proceeds from the uſe of ambiguous or indefinite words. Examples of this occur in the following ſentences: " As for ſuch animals as are *mortal*, " (or noxious,) we have a right to deſtroy " them."† " The Chriſtians rudely diſ- " turbed the *ſervice* of paganiſm; and, " ruſhing in crowds round the tribunals of

* Spectator.

† Guard. 61, quoted by Dr. Campbel, Phil. of Rhet.

" the magiſtrates, called upon them to " pronounce and inflict the ſentence of the " law." * Here it is not eaſy to define what *ſervice* is meant, whether civil or religious. A ſimilar ambiguity may be found in the ſame author. Speaking of the cruelty of Valentinian, the hiſtorian adds: — " The merit of Maximin, who had " ſlaughtered the nobleſt families of Rome, " was rewarded with the royal approbation " and the prefecture of Gaul. Two fierce " and enormous bears, diſtinguiſhed by " the appellations of Innocence and Mica- " aurea, could alone deſerve to *ſhare* the " favour of Maximin." † It is evident that we muſt have recourſe to the context to underſtand that theſe creatures were not the favourites of Maximin, but of Valentinian. A writer on criticiſm has the following ſentence: " There appears to be a " remarkable difference betwixt *one of the* " *firſt* of ancient and of modern critics." ‡

* Gibbon's Hiſt. c. 16. † Gibbon's Hiſt. c. 25.
‡ Ogilvie on Orig. Comp. p. 104.

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The embaraſſment of this ſentence would have been entirely avoided by inſerting the words *one of the firſt* a ſecond time, which probably an apprehenſion of offending the ear prevented.

The caſes are ſo very numerous, in which an ill choice of words, or an imprudent uſe of them, may darken the expreſſion, that it would be almoſt impoſſible to preſcribe any definite rules upon the ſubject.—Perfection in this reſpect is only to be acquired by practice. Poſſibly the following remarks may be of ſome uſe to young writers. Firſt. Endeavour to inform yourſelf perfectly concerning the etymology and meaning of words. Secondly. Conſult the beſt modern authors, and obſerve their different applications. The original ſenſe is not always a certain guide in the uſe of common words; though, if nicely attended to, it will ſometimes help us to the reaſons of their application. Thirdly. Be not too anxious for variety of expreſſion. It is well obſerved by the Abbé Girard, that when a

performance grows dull, it is not ſo much, becauſe the ear is tired by the frequent repetition of the ſame ſound, as becauſe the mind is fatigued by the frequent recurrence of the ſame idea. Laſtly. We cannot be too much on our guard againſt the vulgar idiom. Moſt writers who affect eaſe and familiarity in writing are apt to ſlide into it:

"But eaſe in writing flows from art, not chance,
"As thoſe move eaſieſt who have learn'd to dance."

That ambiguity, as well as inaccuracy, is not uncommonly the effect of introducing the vulgar phraſeology into written compoſition, is evident from the very incorrect and abſurd uſe of the active verb *to lay*, inſtead of the neuter verb *to lie*. This ſoleciſm has ariſen I preſume from confounding the paſt tenſe of the latter with the preſent of the former verb. Let it be obſerved, however, that when a noun follows in the objective caſe, the verb active (to lay) may be uſed; as, to *lay down* an employment;

ment; and ſometimes when the verb is reflected or neutralized; as,

"Soft on the flow'ry herb I found *me laid*." *

But, to ſay "Death *lays* upon her like an untimely froſt," or to ſay "I have a work *laying* by me," would be a groſs and intolerable barbariſm.

Perſpicuity is injured by bad *arrangement*, in the following inſtances.

1ſt. By ſeparating the adjective from its proper ſubſtantive: "they choſe to indulge themſelves in the hour of *natural* feſtivity." — Better "in the *natural* hour of feſtivity."

2dly. By uſing the ſame pronoun in reference to different perſons or things in the ſame ſentence: "and *they* did all eat and "were filled: and *they* took up of the frag-"ments that remained twelve baſkets full." † By the laſt *they* it is difficult to ſay who are meant, the multitude or only the diſciples.

* Milton. † MATT. xiv. 20.

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The following ſentences are faulty on account of an indiſcreet uſe of the relative. Speaking of Porto Bello: "this celebrated "harbour, *which* was formerly very well "defended by forts, *which* Admiral Vernon "deſtroyed in 1740, ſeems to afford an en- "trance 600 toiſes broad; but is ſo ſtrait- "ened with rocks that are near the ſurface "of the water, that it is reduced to a very "narrow channel."* Better thus: "this "celebrated harbour was defended, &c." "It ſeems to afford, &c."—"This activity "drew great numbers of enterprizing men "over to Virginia, who came either in "ſearch of *fortune*, or of *liberty*, *which* is "the only compenſation for the want of *it*:"‖ —here the two antecedents are ſo confounded, that it requires a pauſe to diſtinguiſh them, and the conſtruction is very ungraceful as well as obſcure. One mode of avoiding ambiguity in this caſe will be, when two antecedents occur, putting one

* JUSTAMOND's Tranſ. of *Raynal*, B. 7. ‖ Ib.

of

of them, if poſſible, in the plural, and the other in the ſingular number.

3dly. Obſcurity is produced by ſeparating the adverb and the adjective, or the adverb and the verb. Ex. "A power is "requiſite of fixing the intellectual eye "upon ſucceſſive objects ſo ſteadily, as "that the *more* may never prevent us from "doing juſtice to the *leſs* important." * "His ſubject is preciſely of that kind, "which a daring imagination could *alone* "have adopted:" † — here it is not accurately defined whether a daring imagination *only* could have adopted, &c. or whether it could have adopted that ſubject *only*, and no other. "He conjured the ſenate, that "the purity of his reign might not be "ſtained by the blood *even* of a guilty ſenator:" ‡ — the arrangement would be more perfect, "by the blood of even a "guilty ſenator." "He atoned for the

* Ogilvie *on Orig. Comp.* vol. ii. p. 94. † Ib.
‡ Gibbon's *Hiſt.* c. iv. ad fin.

"murder

" murder of an innocent ſon, by the exe-
" cution, perhaps, of a guilty wife:" *
— the doubt in this ſentence may apply to the reality of the execution. " Their in-
" timacy had commenced in the happier
" period, *perhaps*, of their youth and ob-
" ſcurity."†

4thly. The following is an example of ambiguity ariſing from the wrong poſition of a conjunction. The hiſtorian, ſpeaking of an impolitic edict of Julian, thus expreſſes himſelf: " He enacted *that*, in a
" time of ſcarcity, it (corn) ſhould be ſold
" at a price, which had ſeldom been known
" in the moſt plentiful years." ‡ A common reader would infer from the above, that it was a ſtanding order, that corn ſhould in every time of ſcarcity be ſold cheaper than in a time of plenty, which does not appear from the context to be the intention of the author. Speaking of parents miſjudging of the conduct of ſchoolmaſters,

* Ib. c. 18. † Ib. ‡ Ib.

a modern

a modern author on education adds: "It "has broke * the peace of many an inge- "nious man, who had engaged in the care "of youth, and paved the way to the ruin "of hopeful boys." It is not perfectly clear whether the circumſtance or the maſter "paved the way, &c." It is impoſſible to decipher the following ſentence. Reſpecting the Pennſylvania marble, of which chimney-pieces, tables, &c. are made, the hiſtorian adds: "Theſe valuable materials "could not have been found in common "in the houſes, *unleſs* they had been la- "viſhed in the churches." ‡

5thly. Perſpicuity is injured very frequently by the fear of concluding a ſentence with a trifling word; but ſurely, however ungraceful, a confuſed ſtyle is a much greater blemiſh. "The court of chancery," ſays a reſpectable author, "frequently mi- "tigates, and breaks the teeth of the

* *Broke*, inſtead of *broken*, is bad grammar.

‡ JUSTAMOND's *Raynal*, B. 17.

"common

" common law." From this ſentence it might be inferred, that it *mitigated* the teeth. Better, therefore: " frequently mitigates the common law, and breaks the teeth of it," or " its teeth."

6thly. It is an old obſervation, that the deſire of brevity generally induces obſcurity. This is exemplified in many forms of expreſſion, to which habit ſerves to reconcile us, but which are in themſelves really ambiguous. Thus we ſpeak of " the reformation of Luther;" which, if the circumſtance were not well underſtood, might mean the reformation of the man, inſtead of the reformation of the church.

7thly. An error oppoſite to this is long ſentences and parentheſes. Long periods, however, ſeldom create obſcurity, when the natural order of thought is preſerved; eſpecially if each diviſion, clauſe, or member of the ſentence, be complete in itſelf. It is in general the inſertion of foreign matter, and parenthetical ſentences, that confuſe a ſtyle.

From

From theſe few obſervations concerning perſpicuity, it will be ſufficiently obvious, that the obſcurity of ſome preachers does not reſult from the profundity and ſublimity of their matter, (as they would wiſh us to believe,) nor yet altogether from a confuſion of ideas, but frequently from a turbid and perplexed ſtyle. In general, however, we may ſafely lay it down as an incontrovertible maxim, that the ſermon, which is not clear and intelligible, is the worſt of ſermons: ſince, however trite the matter, however vulgar the language, if it be underſtood, ſomething may ſtill be gleaned from it.

II. The ſecond eſſential of a good ſtyle, which I pointed out, was PURITY, or elegance. The ſtyle of ſermons, I am ready to grant, ought to be ſuited in general to the audience. But there is a certain ſtyle, which is adapted to people of almoſt all deſcriptions: that, I mean, which equally avoids technical and affected expreſſions, and thoſe which are mean and vulgar. In purſuing

purſuing this ſubject, that I may not fatigue the reader with new diſtinctions, I ſhall follow the method which I adopted in the former caſe, and ſhall firſt conſider purity of ſtyle as relating to the choice of words; and, next, as to the arrangement of them.

The offences againſt PURITY of ſtyle, as far as reſpects the *choice of words*, may be reduced to the following heads. 1ſt. *Obſolete* or uncommon expreſſions.* 2d. *Vulgariſms.* 3d. *Jargon*, or *cant.*

1ſt. In an age of novelty we have very little to apprehend from obſolete expreſſions. Scarcely any perſon, who is at all converſant with polite company, would uſe ſuch expreſſions as *behoof*, *beheſt*, *peradventure*, *ſundry*, *anon*, &c. It is not a very eaſy matter to determine the era of pure Engliſh;

* "In words, as faſhions, the ſame rule will hold;
"Alike fantaſtic, if too new or old.
"Be not the firſt by whom the new are try'd,
"Nor yet the laſt to lay the old aſide."

Eſſ. on Crit.

but

but I think we ſhould not look further back than the Revolution: Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Hobbes, and even Temple, are ſcarcely to be conſidered as authorities in this reſpect.

Contrary to this, is the more faſhionable error of uſing affected language, and particularly Galliciſms. This nation has been little indebted to the literature of France; and we have no occaſion to change the bullion of our language for the tinſel of theirs. Dr. Campbell has, with great accuracy, collected a variety of theſe new-imported phraſes, which he very properly calls, "ſtray words, or exiles," that have no affinity to our language, and indeed are no better than inſects of the day. It is of the utmoſt importance to literature to adopt ſome ſtandard of language; there is no ſetting bounds to the liberty of coining words, if it be at all admitted; and, in that caſe, the invaluable productions of our anceſtors will ſoon become totally unintelligible.

2d. But the more dangerous vice, becauſe it is the more common, and eſpecially among the popular preachers of the day, is VULGARITY. Some inſtances of this, however, are to be found in very approved authors, and ſeem to demonſtrate how neceſſary it is to be on our guard againſt it. Lord Kaims ſpeaks of the comedies of Ariſtophanes *wallowing* in looſeneſs and detraction,* (which is moreover a falſe metaphor;) of "the *puſhing* genius of a nation;† of a nation being devoid of *bowels*,"‡ &c. The following phraſe is ſurely intolerably low for ſerious compoſition: "To imagine that the gratifying of any "ſenſe, or the indulging of any delicacy in "meat, drink, or apparel, is in itſelf a "vice, can never *enter into a head* that is "not diſordered, &c."‖ Dr. Beattie is not free from ſuch expreſſions as "a *long-winded* rhetorician," "ſcreaming and

* *Sketches of Man.* † Ib. B. ii. §. 7.
‡ Ib. B. vii. §. 7. ‖ HUME's *Eſſ. on Refinement in Arts.*

"*ſqualling*,"

"*ſqualling*," &c. and Dr. Blair ſpeaks of a circumſtance *popping out* upon us; of Milton having *chalked out* a new road in poetry; of Achilles *pitching upon* Briſeïs, &c.* —— Perhaps nothing but good books and good company can purify the ſtyle from coarſe and vulgar expreſſions; ſometimes, indeed, the aptneſs of theſe words renders it difficult to reject them. When, however, we meet with a low word, we ought diligently to look for one ſynonimous to it. It would probably be a very improving exerciſe to make a collection, as they occur, of choice and elegant expreſſions, which may be employed inſtead of the common and colloquial. Thus, for *heaping up*, we may uſe ACCUMULATING;

* Theſe and many other inaccuracies are pointed out in a very excellent critical examination of Dr. Blair's Lectures, publiſhed in the Critical Review for October 1783. Mr. Robinſon's tranſlation of Claude is very faulty in this reſpect: he ſpeaks of a *knack* of doing things; of *ſticking faſt*, for adhering to; of the *old ſetter* the biſhop; inſtead of to re-examine, he uſes to *call over*; inſtead of to deceive, to *gull*; for being exaſperated, *ready to go mad*.

for *ſhunned*, AVOIDED; for to *brag*, to BOAST; for their *betters*, their SUPERIORS; for I *got rid of*, I AVOIDED. A polite writer, inſtead of ſaying he is *puſhed on*, will ſay IMPELLED; inſtead of *go forwards*, or *go on*, PROCEED; inſtead of you *take me*, you UNDERSTAND; inſtead of I *had as lief*, I ſhould LIKE AS WELL; inſtead of a *moot point*, a DISPUTED point; inſtead of *pro & con*, on BOTH SIDES; inſtead of *by the bye*, BY THE WAY, (though I do not much like either;) inſtead of *ſhut* our ears, CLOSE our ears; inſtead of *fell to work*, BEGAN. Some words it will be better to leave out; as, inſtead of ſaying, "he has a conſiderable *deal* of merit," ſay, "he has conſiderable merit."

When an idiom can be avoided, and a phraſe ſtrictly grammatical introduced, the latter will always be moſt graceful: for inſtance, it is more elegant to ſay, "I *would* rather," than "I *had* rather." This idiom probably took its riſe from the abbreviation *I'd*,

I'd, which in converſation ſtands equally for I *would*, or I *had*.

When a ſubſtitute cannot be found for a mean word, it is better to reform the ſentence altogether, and to expreſs it by a periphraſis: one ſuch "fly will mar the ointment" of the moſt harmonious periods.

3d. Nothing, however, can be more oppoſite to purity or elegance of ſtyle, than the unmeaning JARGON, which low and illiterate preachers introduce, ſometimes in order to aſſume an air of erudition.* Such phraſes as *creaturely comforts*; *man-God*; *everlaſting ubiquity*; *celeſtial panoply*; *Triune-God*; &c. &c. are barbariſms not to be endured.† Indeed, were I to detail the in-

 ſtances

* "There is a ſort of divines, who, if they do but happen of an unlucky hard word all the week, think themſelves not careful of their flock, if they lay it not up till Sunday, and beſtow it among them in their next ſermon." EACHARD's *Contempt of the Clergy*, p. 46.

† "Among *hard words*, I number likewiſe thoſe which are peculiar to divinity as it is a ſcience, becauſe I have obſerved ſeveral clergymen, otherwiſe little fond of ob-

"ſcure

ſtances of this depraved phraſeology, I ſhould ſcarcely be leſs diſguſting than thoſe who employ it. Similar to theſe are the endearing diminutives, the compound epithets, ſuch as *life-giving*, *ſoul-ſaving*, &c. and the fulſome repetition of the moſt ſacred names, introduced by ſome preachers. *Unaffected* is an epithet, appropriated in a manner to real devotion, which is diſplayed in actions, and in ſentiments, and not in words; indeed I do not know, whether the too frequent and familiar introduction of the moſt ſolemn expreſſions, even in the pulpit, may not ſerve to leſſen, rather than to increaſe our reſpect for the great object of Chriſtian worſhip.

" ſcure terms, yet in their ſermons very liberal of thoſe " which they find in eccleſiaſtical writers, as if it were " our duty to underſtand them; which I am ſure it is not." SWIFT's *Letter to a young Clergyman*. " I believe, I may " venture to inſiſt, further, that many terms uſed in holy " writ, particularly by St. Paul," (he means in our antiquated tranſlation of the apoſtle's writings,) " might, with " more diſcretion, be changed into plainer ſpeech." Ib.

PURITY

PURITY of ſtyle, as far as reſpects *arrangement*, is equally violated by affected ſtatelineſs, and by negligence and incorrectneſs. Of the former kind are the following inſtances.

1ſt. Placing the nominative caſe after the verb. Ex. "Wonderful are the effects of "this paſſion in every view." "Not a "little elegant is this manner of wri-"ting."*

2dly. The objective caſe in the beginning of the ſentence. "Varieties of national "character we obſerve imprinted on the "phyſiognomy of nations."† And not unlike this is Mr. Gordon's very depraved conſtruction in his tranſlation of Tacitus: "At this time war there was none."

3dly. The objective caſe before the imperative mood. "How many nations have "certainly fallen from that importance, "which they had formerly borne among

* Tranſlation of Trapp's Prælectiones.

† DUNBAR's Eſſays.

" the ſocieties of mankind, let the annals " of the world declare." *

I know nothing that more enfeebles a ſtyle, than beginning ſentences with connective particles, ſuch as *and*, *though*, *but*, *however*, *therefore*, &c. It ſeems to put the reader out of breath, and partakes in ſome meaſure of the ungracefulneſs and confuſion of long ſentences. It alſo deſtroys that compactneſs, which gives energy to ſtyle. Theſe circumſtances have made it common to introduce the connective as the ſecond or third word of the ſentence: and the ſame reaſons are almoſt equally forcible againſt the uſe of relatives in the beginning of ſentences.

It has alſo been generally eſteemed ungraceful to conclude a ſentence with a prepoſition or a trifling word. The auxiliary verbs are generally very bad concluſions. Ex. " If this affects him, what muſt the " firſt motion of his zeal be?" †

* Ib. † Robinson from Maſſillon.

Laſtly,

Laſtly. There is often inelegance in placing the adverb before the auxiliary verb, as in the following inſtance: "The queſtion ſtated in the preceding chapter never has been fully conſidered." * It would, I think, be better, "has never been fully, &c."

It would be impoſſible on this occaſion to deſcend to a very minute detail. A good ear, and the peruſal of good authors muſt unite to form a good taſte in this particular. Pedantry, however, more frequently miſleads us than any other cauſe. The ſtyle of female writers flows eaſier, and is commonly more harmonious, than that of profeſſed ſcholars. One general rule may indeed be admitted: in narrative or plain didactic compoſition, in thoſe which are intended merely to convey information, the natural order of the words is to be preferred; but, when paſſion or ſublimity is the object, this order may be departed from,

* Lord Monboddo, Orig. and Prog. Lang. c. ii.

and

and a ſentence muſt never conclude with a weak member or a trifling word. As perſpicuity demands that enough ſhall be diſplayed in the firſt part of the ſentence to make the aim of it manifeſt; ſo elegance and vivacity demand a degree of energy at the termination of it in order to leave an impreſſion on the mind. Sometimes, however, in very animated expreſſion, it has a good effect to place the emphatic word the firſt in order, as: *Bleſſed* is he "that cometh in the name of the Lord."— "*Silver* and *gold* have I none, but ſuch as "I have I give thee." In this laſt ſentence, the eager expectation, and the imploring look of the beggar naturally lead to a vivid conception of what was in his thoughts; and this conception is anſwered by the form, in which the declaration of the apoſtle is couched.

III. As a ſermon is an oratorical compoſition, as it is intended for a popular aſſembly, and ought to intereſt the attention at leaſt of the auditors, perſpicuity

ity and purity of ſtyle are ſcarcely ſufficient commendations. It ſhould be calculated not only to inſtruct, but to perſuade; not only to inform the judgement, but to conciliate the paſſions. Some degree of RHETORICAL EMBELLISHMENT, therefore, becomes abſolutely neceſſary; and it is one of the moſt difficult points to determine the nature, as well as the degree of this embelliſhment.

It is obvious that the ornaments of oratory are materially different from thoſe of poetry. The aim of the former is to inform and perſuade; of the latter to amuſe. The one addreſſes the judgement and the paſſions; the other, the fancy. The one requires the utmoſt perſpicuity; in the other, ſome degree of obſcurity is frequently a beauty: a different choice and ſelection of the imagery and figures, which are employed, becomes therefore requiſite in theſe different forms of compoſition.

The elegance of poetry frequently depends upon the happy application of imagery

gery aſſumed from natural objects: the imagery proper for oratory is the imagery of ſentiment. In the one, the woods, the plains, the fountains, and the hills, the expanded ocean, the ſerenity of the heavens, are the moſt ſtriking objects; in the other, the human paſſions and purſuits, the fate of empires, the revolutions of fortune, and the uncertainty and variation in human affairs.

The *compariſon*, which is frequently one of the moſt engaging figures in poetry, and affords the fulleſt ſcope for luxuriant deſcription, is in general too cold and formal for oratory. The beauty of *metaphors* will frequently be loſt in an attention to the ſubject, or in the warmth of the enunciation; and *alluſions* and *metonymies* will rather obſcure than enlighten the ſubject. *Perſonification* is ſtill more allied to obſcurity; and *allegory* is leaſt adapted of all to this ſpecies of compoſition. Inſtead of this play of the imagination, the orator muſt employ a force and energy of expreſſion, a warmth

warmth of ſentiment, and the ſtronger figures of *iteration*, *eroteſis*, and *climax*.*

* The following is a fine inſtance of what I call the ITERATION, or repetition.—" I have ſlain, I have ſlain, not a " Sp. Mælius, who was ſuſpected of aiming at the regal " power; not a Tiberius Gracchus, who ſeditiouſly depoſed " his colleague from the magiſtracy: but I have ſlain the " man, whoſe adulteries our nobleſt matrons diſcovered in " the ſacred receſſes of the gods; the man, by whoſe pu- " niſhment the ſenate ſo frequently determined to expiate " the violation of the moſt ſolemn rites; the man, who by " the hands of his ſlaves expelled a citizen, who was " eſteemed by the ſenate, by the people, by every nation " upon earth, the preſerver of the city; the man, who " gave and took away kingdoms, and diſtributed the world " at his pleaſure; the man, who defiled the forum " with blood; the man, who fired the temple of the " nymphs; in a word, the man who governed himſelf by " no principle, who acknowledged no law, who ſubmitted " to no limitation." CIC. *pro Milone*. The writings of St. Paul abound in theſe bold figures, particularly the EROTESIS, of which there are ſome uncommonly animated examples: " What! have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? " or deſpiſe ye the church of GOD, and ſhame them that " have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? Shall I praiſe you " in this? I praiſe you not." 1 COR. xi. 22. The following is an example of the three figures united: " Are they " Hebrews? ſo am I: are they Iſraelites? ſo am I: are " they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo am I: are they miniſters " of CHRIST? (I ſpeak as a fool,) I am more, &c." 2 COR. xi. 22, 23.

In

In the uſe of theſe, however, he muſt be extremely cautious; for they are dangerous in the hands of the unſkilful, and require the niceſt taſte in the application of them.

After all, it is a queſtion, whether the modern compoſitions of the pulpit are not rather to be blamed for too much than for too little affectation of ornament.* In this caſe, perhaps, negative inſtruction may be the moſt uſeful; and to ſhew what a ſtyle ought not to be, may anſwer a better purpoſe, than an imperfect endeavour to deſcribe all the excellences and graces which a lively imagination and a fine taſte may invent.

In the firſt place, the popular harangues of the day have more of poetry† than of oratory

* "The ornaments of language generally coſt the writer much trouble, and produce ſmall advantage to the hearer. Let the character of your ſermons be truth and information, and a *decent particularity*." — PALEY's Ordin. Serm.

† "Another thing, that brings great diſreſpect and miſchief upon the clergy, is their packing their ſermons ſo full

oratory in them, if falſe metaphor, inconſiſtent allegory, and in all reſpects "proſe run mad," can have any claim to that appellation. Not ſatisfied with adopting whimſical alluſions, they purſue them to an extreme of abſurdity:

"And ductile dulneſs new meanders makes,
"And one poor word a thouſand ſenſes takes."*

It can be no gratification to a rational mind to give pain, otherwiſe I could furniſh ſpecimens of this kind abundantly ridicu-

"full of *ſimilitudes*; which all the world know, carry with "them but very ſmall force of argument, unleſs there be "an exact agreement with that which is compared; of "which there is very ſeldom any ſufficient care taken." EACHARD's *Contempt*, &c. p. 58.

* "This is almoſt the perpetual vice of mean and low "preachers; for, when they catch a figurative word, or a "metaphor, as when GOD's word is called a *fire*, or a *ſword*, "or the church a *houſe*, &c. they never fail to make a long "detail of conformities between the figures and the ſubjects "themſelves, and frequently ſay ridiculous things." ROBINSON's Claude, c. ii.

lous.

lous.* Figures, which have no ingenuity to recommend them, but are trite and common, ought carefully to be avoided.

Secondly, One of the moſt glaring vices of bad orators is the exclamation: —

* It would be no very difficult matter to parallel the following ſpecimens, which Dr. Eachard has quoted from the popular orators of his day.

" 'Tis reported of a tree growing upon the bank of the " Euphrates, that it brings forth an apple, to the eye very " fair and tempting, but inwardly it is filled with nothing " but uſeleſs and deceitful duſt. — Duſt we are, and to duſt " we muſt all go." *Contempt of the Clergy*, p. 62.

" I cannot omit that of the famous divine, who, adviſing the people in days of danger to run unto the Lord, " tells them, that they cannot go to the Lord, much leſs " run without feet; there are therefore two feet to run to " the Lord, *faith* and *prayer*. 'Tis plain that faith is a " foot; for, *by faith we ſtand*. 2 Cor. i. 24. The ſecond " is prayer, a ſpiritual leg to bear us thither: now, that " prayer is a ſpiritual leg, appears from ſeveral places of " Scripture, as from JONAH, c. ii. v. 7. *and my prayer " came unto thy holy temple*," &c. Ib. p. 70.

Upon the text, MATT. iv. 25. *and there followed him great multitudes of people from* GALILEE. " I diſcover, (ſays the " preacher,) when JESUS prevails with us, we ſhall ſoon " leave our GALILEES. I diſcover alſo (ſays he) a great " miracle, viz. that the way after JESUS being *ſtrait*, that " ſuch a multitude ſhould follow him." Ib. p. 84.

" Oh!

" Oh!‡ my beloved Chriſtians!" " Ah! my dear hearers!" " How delightful! how enlivening! how wonderful! how ſtupendous!" Such unmeaning phraſes as theſe fill up all the blanks of their diſcourſes, and ſtand in the place of ſenſe and ſentiment; to the critical eye, however, they never fail to diſcover " the nakedneſs of the land," and to exhibit the preacher labouring at a ſtrain of pathos, which he is not able to effect. There is no figure which is ſo nearly allied to the frigid as this. It was therefore never admitted by the Greeks,

‡ There is not a word in the whole compaſs of the Engliſh language to which the popular preacher is under ſo many obligations as this ſmall interjection. It intrudes itſelf upon all occaſions, and if uttered with a proper vociferation, and a ſmart thump upon the breaſt, ſeldom fails to be followed by a reaſonable number of groans and ſighs from a certain part of the congregation. To every perſon, however, of taſte and reflexion, it only indicates a *wiſh to be pathetic, without the power of being ſo*. This is not the oratory of Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke or Mr. Sheridan.

and very rarely by the Roman orators.* It never appears in the diſcourſes of Barrow, of Sherlock, and of Atterbury.—Whether our popular preachers have improved upon theſe models or not, the reader will be at no loſs to determine.

Thirdly. It is a poor expedient, and frequently borders on the ridiculous, to introduce interlocutors in a ſermon, and make ſpeeches for the different characters. This artifice is generally adopted in order to diſplay the theatrical geſture, and verſatile talents of the preacher. It is impoſſible to ſee a good *religious facemaker* (as they are termed by the ſagacious Dr. Eachard) perform one of theſe pulpit-farces, without thinking of the ſtrolling player in Scarron, who acted a whole play himſelf, only varying his poſition, attitude

* See Lord MONBODDO's *Orig. and Prog. of Lang.* vol. iii.

" I know a gentleman, who made it a rule in reading, to " ſkip over all ſentences, where he ſpied a note of exclama- " tion at the end." SWIFT, Lett. to a young Clerg.

and

and voice, according as he repreſented the King, the Queen, or the Ambaſſador. Theſe minor orations are commonly very dull paraphraſes of ſome animated paſſage of Holy Writ, and are ſometimes no leſs inconſiſtent with decorum, than with the rules of chaſte compoſition.

A fourth device of theſe flimſy orators, when in a ſtrait for matter or ſentiment, (which is often the caſe,) is to force in a huge Scripture quotation; no matter how foreign to the general ſubject of the diſcourſe: it has an air of piety, and therefore generally impoſes on the well-meaning, but undiſcerning, part of the audience.

Young orators are generally fond of the ſublime to a degree of enthuſiaſm, and are too apt to affect it when leaſt qualified. They are therefore very liable to deviate into bombaſt. The marking characters of the bombaſtic, or falſe ſublime, are: 1ſt. Words without a diſtinct appropriate meaning, which the author himſelf probably could not define, if he were called up-

on to do it. 2dly. Deſcriptions, which cannot be reduced to canvaſs, which exhibit no diſtinct and uniform picture. 3dly. Similes and figures diſproportioned to the ſubject. 4thly. An abundance of redundant, and unmeaning epithets.

An error apparently oppoſite to this, but frequently united with it, is the *feeble* ſtyle. The characters of this are: 1ſt. Looſe and disjointed ſentences, without point or concluſion. 2dly. Common-place imagery and expreſſions. 3dly. Colloquial expreſſions: as, "Well, but ſays ſome objector," &c.

One of the moſt common and the moſt dangerous errors, however, is the *mock pathos*. Many (I doubt not well-intentioned) perſons conceive that they are to go to church for nothing but to weep; and the pitiful methods employed by ſome preachers to excite their tears cannot fail to have a direct contrary effect with every rational perſon.* I am ſenſible that much will, in

* "A lady aſked a certain great perſon, coming out of "church, whether it were not a very *moving* diſcourſe? — "*Yes*, ſaid he, *I was extremely ſorry, for the man is my* "*friend.*" SWIFT, Lett. to a young Clerg.

this

this caſe, depend upon the acting of a ſermon, (as Dr. Warburton calls it.) I could mention a popular preacher, who regularly weeps at a certain period of his diſcourſe, whether the ſubject be pathetic or not. The device generally ſucceeds with that part of the audience (and that is a pretty conſiderable portion) who pay no attention to the matter, and regard only the geſticulation of the preacher. This religious buffoonery, however, muſt neceſſarily diſguſt every judicious hearer; and the cenſure of one perſon of ſenſe is, in my opinion, but weakly counterbalanced by the overflowing ſcale of vulgar popularity.

V. OF MANNER, OR DELIVERY.

In treating of MANNER, I ſhall endeavour to contract this diſſertation within ſtill narrower limits than I have done on the preceding topics: and for this plain reaſon, that I conceive it to be the leaſt neceſſary.

More attention has lately been laviſhed upon this art, than upon the more ſubſtantial objects of criticiſm; and, after all, the careful obſervation of good ſpeakers will do more than all the abſtract ſtudy in the world. Speaking is a practical art, and we might as well pretend to teach a young perſon to dance, as to ſpeak, by books only.

The principal points to be obſerved on this ſubject are MODULATION, EMPHASIS, and ACTION.

Firſt, with reſpect to MODULATION. It is evident, that the voice naturally aſſumes a different tone on different occaſions. In common converſation, and in narrative, the voice flows in an even tenor, often approaching to monotony. In teaching or explaining, it is ſlower, more diſtinct, ſomething more energetic, and rather leſs inclining to monotony. In extremes of paſſion, it is unequal, tremulous, and frequently interrupted. The great excellence of art is to reduce thoſe obſervations, with which we are furniſhed by nature, to a regular

gular ſyſtem; and to produce on all occaſions, what nature will do in its moſt perfect ſtate.

The modulation ſuitable to the pulpit will be ſufficiently apparent from theſe conſiderations. That violence of paſſion, which it is the excellence of a player to imitate, cannot poſſibly have any place there. The preacher's buſineſs is to argue, to convince, to perſuade, not to ſtorm or rage at his congregation. The raving and furious manner of ſome preachers may indeed, by mere dint of lungs, keep a congregation from dozing, but can neither inform nor conciliate any perſon of true taſte or real piety.

Apparently oppoſite to this, though not ſeldom united in the ſame perſon, (for variety is the principal aim of theſe orators, though it be no more than a variety in abſurdity,) is the *whine*. Nothing ſurely can be more diſguſting, nothing more inconſiſtent with the dignity of a public teacher, than to ſee a "robuſtous perriwig-pated

"fellow," * ſobbing like an overgrown ſchool-girl, and copying all the contorſions of a player; when, in reality, the occaſion for ſuch exceſſive ſorrow, or rather the affectation of it, cannot poſſibly occur, in a compoſition altogether of the didactic kind.

From the nature of his office, from the nature of his compoſition, the preacher ſhould always, in his enunciation, ſtudy "to beget a temperance that may give it a "ſmoothneſs."‡ Nothing can compenſate for the loſs of dignity; and the ſtrong, energetic, yet temperate and even manner, is alone conſiſtent with true dignity.

Above all things, the young preacher ought moſt carefully to avoid an unnatural or affected tone. At a period, when, from the frequency of theatrical exhibitions, the taſte of the public, with reſpect to ſpeaking, is much improved, ſuch a defect will

* SHAKESPEARE's Hamlet.

‡ Ib.

ſcarcely

ſcarcely eſcape the cenſure of even the ignorant and vulgar. In fact, I never knew of but one inſtance to the contrary. I remember, ſome years ago, in a conſiderable town in the North of England, a perſon offered himſelf as a candidate for a living, who performed the ſervice in a tone of voice, which could only be compared to very bad chanting; it ſavoured indeed more of the ſynagogue than of the cathedral; and the compoſition of his ſermon was as unintelligible as his manner was extraordinary. The judicious electors, becauſe the exhibition was uncommon, concluded that it muſt be ſomething remarkably fine. They afterwards accidentally diſcovered their miſtake, but not till it was too late to rectify it.

Secondly. It is obvious, that every perſon, in diſcourſing earneſtly upon any ſubject, uſually marks, by a certain force or inflexion of voice, the ſignificant and energetic words and expreſſions; and, both the number of thoſe expreſſions, and the force with

with which they are enunciated, increaſe in proportion to the paſſion or vehemence of the ſpeaker.

EMPHASIS is either abſolute or relative. Abſolute emphaſis depends upon the ſubject, and conſiſts in laying a ſtreſs upon ſuch words, as we would wiſh to be particularly marked, and remembered; ſuch as are directly connected with the ſenſe of the whole; and on which it ſeems, in ſome degree, to depend.

Relative emphaſis has a reſpect to ſomething immediately going before or coming after, on which the ſenſe of the ſentence depends. The whole point and force of the following ſentence would be loſt by a wrong emphaſis: "Philoſophy alone can "boaſt, (and perhaps it is only the *boaſt* of "philoſophy,) that her gentle hand is able "to eradicate from the human mind the "latent and deadly principle of fanati-"ciſm." * "Another ſervant, being *his*

* GIBBON'S Hiſt. c. XXV.

"kinſman,

"kinſman, whoſe ear Peter cut off:" here, unleſs a proper emphaſis be laid, there will be ſome room for ſuppoſing, that the ſervant was the kinſman of Peter, and that he was actually the perſon, whoſe ear had been cut off. In the following lines, much obſcurity may be produced by an improper emphaſis:

"If *clouds* or *earthquakes* break not heaven's deſign,
"Why then a *Borgia* or a *Catiline?*"

Unleſs the reader remembers, that the word *ſhould* is underſtood, and reads the verſes accordingly, the auditors might ſuppoſe the latter line to relate merely to the exiſtence of a Borgia, &c.*

* If the great convulſions of nature, ſays Mr. Pope in this couplet, do not interrupt the order of Almighty providence, why ſhould it be interrupted by the convulſions of the moral world; why ſhould a Borgia or a Catiline not make a part of the plan and order of divine government, as much as thoſe natural phenomena, the cauſes of which are now well underſtood, and which are known to be perfectly conſiſtent with the general laws of nature?

Sometimes

Sometimes half a ſentence is emphatic with reſpect to the reſt. Ex. " The *odia* " *in longum jacens*, I thought had belonged " only to the *worſt character* of *antiquity*." ‡ Unleſs each of theſe latter words be pronounced with equal force, the ſenſe of the author will be deſtroyed, as will be evident by placing the emphaſis on either *worſt* or *antiquity*, and comparing it with the context.

The great uſe of emphaſis is to render a diſcourſe plain and intelligible to the auditors; and, conſequently, that emphaſis is moſt judicious, which is moſt diſcriminative. For this reaſon, I diſagree with both Mr. Garrick and Dr. Johnſon in their mode of accenting the latter commandments of the Decalogue. * " Thou ſhalt not " ſteal," for inſtance. Here Mr. Garrick placed the emphaſis upon the auxiliary verb *ſhalt*, which was evidently wrong, as Dr. Johnſon objected that the commandment

‡ JUNIUS *to Sir W. Draper.*

* See Sir JOHN HAWKINS's *Life of Dr. Johnſon.*

was

was negative; and he accordingly placed the emphaſis upon *not*. It is plain, however, that this emphaſis neither ſerves to explain the nature of the commandment, nor to point the attention to its principal object. The congregation are ſufficiently aware, that the Decalogue conſiſts of authoritative precepts, and therefore there cannot be the leaſt neceſſity for dwelling upon the verb *ſhalt*; moſt of the commandments are of a negative kind, and of courſe there can be no occaſion to make *not* the principal word in the ſentence; and that, too, with a manifeſt riſk that the principal object of the commandment ſhall not be heard, or at leaſt not attended to. Beſides this, we are ſo accuſtomed to what I call relative emphaſis, that, by accenting either of thoſe words, the ear is naturally led to expect ſomething correſpondent to them: thus, by ſaying "Thou ſhalt *not* ſteal," the auditor is induced to expect the antithetical *but*, with ſome correſpondent appendage. The truth is, both theſe words

ſhould

ſhould be pronounced with a full tone of voice; but, the real force of the emphaſis ought to reſt upon the word *ſteal*, or whatever word particularly diſtinguiſhes the commandment from the reſt.

Thirdly. On the ſubject of ACTION, I find much to reprehend in moſt preachers, and I might add in moſt players alſo. The moſt general vice is *unmeaning* action. Mr. Garrick uſed leſs action than any performer I ever ſaw; but his action had always ſome meaning, it always ſpoke: and, by making uſe of leſs than other actors, it perhaps had the greater force.

In this caſe, ſome reſpect muſt be had to the character of the nation, which is gravity; ſome reſpect muſt be had to that which the ſpeaker aſſumes: and a preacher of the Goſpel is certainly the graveſt of characters. Much action is expreſſive of levity, and therefore altogether inconſiſtent with both theſe circumſtances. Beſides, action is in general expreſſive of great paſſion, and therefore cannot be required, or even

even expected in a public ſpeaker, whoſe buſineſs is only to teach or to explain.

Some kinds of action are in themſelves ungraceful. I have ſeen one preacher, whoſe hands were conſtantly employed, as if he were engaged in the occupation of a grave-digger; and another, who ſeemed perpetually hammering nails into the pulpit. I know no attitude ſo completely diſguſting as what I call the *ſpread-eagle* attitude, with both wings elevated as if in the action of flying: and I have heard of a certain preacher, who was ludicrouſly compared to a *tea-pot*, from the affected poſition in which he commonly addreſſed the multitude.

The meaneſt ſpecies of buffoonery is that of *acting your words*; and yet I have known this practice confer ſome degree of popularity. To underſtand perfectly the abſurdity of it, it is only neceſſary to obſerve it in exceſs. What ſhould we think of the perſon, for inſtance, who, in reading the following lines, ſhould think proper

per to repreſent the actions which they deſcribe?

" Did ſome more ſober critic *come abroad*,
" If wrong, I *ſmil'd*; if right, I *kiſs'd* the rod."

Or if, in reading the introductory ſentence of the Common-Prayer, " *Rend* your *hearts*, and not your *garments*," a clergyman were to mimic theſe actions, ſhould we not think he meant to ridicule either the liturgy or the congregation? Depend upon it, it is not leſs eſſentially abſurd, and only differs in degree, when the preacher, every time the heart is mentioned, claps his hand to his breaſt; or, if he reads " the *heavens* " declare the glory of GOD," thinks it neceſſary to raiſe his arm, as if pointing to a ſign-poſt.

Every thing like affectation ought to be cautiouſly avoided. * If a preacher can

* " Off come the gloves; and, the hands being well " chafed, he ſhrinks up his ſhoulders, and ſtretches forth " himſelf as if he were going to cleave a bullock's head, or " rive the body of an oak." EACHARD's *Contempt of the Clergy*.

unite

unite good ſenſe and piety with a ſtyle tolerably ſmooth and harmonious; if his voice be not harſh or diſguſting; and if his delivery be eaſy and unembarraſſed, he will find no need of flouriſhes to render himſelf agreeable. Few can excel in the higher requiſites of oratory: few can be fine ſpeakers; but all may be correct and agreeable ſpeakers, if they will not be too ambitious of being fine ſpeakers. If an orator once loſe ſight of nature, no exertion of art can compenſate for the deviation.

It has been frequently debated, whether a ſermon may be delivered to moſt advantage, perfectly extempore, from memory, or from written notes. I have tried all theſe methods; and, from repeated experience, I do not heſitate to give the preference to the laſt. In ſpeaking extempore, the mind is too intent upon the matter and the language, to attend to the manner; and, though the emphaſis will in general be right, this is more than counterbalanced by the defects in modulation, and by the want

of that harmonious and full concluſion of the periods, which may be effected, when we are previouſly acquainted with the extent of the ſentence. In delivering a compoſition by rote, the memory is ſo much upon the ſtretch, that a degree of embarraſſment neceſſarily enſues. The ſucceſs of the actors, I am aware, will form a ſtrong objection to this obſervation; but, let it be remembered, the ſpeeches, which they have to commit to memory, are ſo ſhort, that they will not bear any compariſon with the delivery of a long and complex piece of compoſition: not to mention the aids, which they receive from what is called the *cue*, or the reſponſes of the other characters, and from the conſtant attention of the prompter.

It was my intention to have concluded with a critical examination of the moſt approved ſpecimens extant in this ſpecies of compoſition; but I find I have already exceeded my limits, and, I fear, have exhauſted the patience of the reader. Indeed I have

I have been compelled, for the ſake of brevity, to omit ſeveral remarks, which might have been uſeful to ſome, and acceptable to many perſons; and have confined myſelf to what I eſteemed abſolutely neceſſary.

To revert to a ſubject, which I formerly declined, becauſe I apprehended it would be more properly introduced in this place. The reader will do me injuſtice, if he conceives that this diſſertation is meant either in apology or in commendation of the diſcourſes which follow. On the contrary, I do not pretend to ſay, that my own writings will, in all reſpects, ſtand the teſt of the rules which I have preſumed to recommend. Many of theſe diſcourſes were compoſed at an early period of life, before I had given that critical attention to the ſubject, which I have ſince beſtowed upon it; and, after all, there are other qualities beſides taſte required to form good compoſitions; and it is eaſier to conceive of beauty and perfection in the abſtract, than practically to excel.

Should it be objected, that I ought to have deferred the publication, unleſs they appeared perfectly conſiſtent with my notions of excellence, the anſwer is plain: — that it was poſſible they might poſſeſs ſome qualities, which, in my eſtimation, might counterbalance, in ſome meaſure, theſe defects. Thus far, at leaſt, I will venture to allege in their favour, that they are adapted in general to the buſineſs of common life, and I think calculated to be practically uſeful. But it would be tedious and impertinent to enter into a minute detail of the motives which determined me to publiſh, or which influenced my choice in the ſelection of theſe diſcourſes. However ſlender their claim upon the favour of the public, one good end at leaſt will be anſwered by the publication. The firſt-fruits of every man's induſtry ought to be conſecrated to his profeſſion; and theſe ſermons, and this diſſertation will, I flatter myſelf, be ſufficient to prove, that, whatever my other

other literary engagements, I have not been wholly inattentive to that object.

SERMONS, &c.

SERMON I.

FAITH IN CHRIST A POSITIVE DUTY.*

JOHN VIII. 24.

If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.

IN ſo much perplexity and inconſiſtence do theſe words, at firſt ſight, appear to be involved, that we are almoſt tempted to pronounce them *a hard ſaying*, and to exclaim, with the firſt auditors of OUR LORD, *who can bear it!*—Is belief, then, dependent

* Preached, at the Aſylum, June the 11th, 1786.

on the will alone? Can I believe juſt what I determine to believe, and ſay to my underſtanding, "be convinced, whether you "have proof ſufficient to convince or "not"? If I cannot do this, how ſhould I incur guilt for what is not in my power? and how unjuſt muſt the very idea appear of annexing everlaſting puniſhment to a defect of nature, an imbecillity of mind, and conſequently what can never be conſidered as an error of the heart?

St. PAUL himſelf has confeſſed, that, *without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory:* and are we to wonder, that there ſhould exiſt minds not vigorous enough to purſue and to comprehend a ſeries of facts, which ſeem contradictory to all thoſe notions we have received through the medium of experience? and are not thoſe men rather to be pitied than condemned, who, wanting the higher

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endowments of the underſtanding, have not been able to elevate their minds to thoſe great intellectual ſpeculations which regard the ſpiritual world, and which ſeem neceſſary in order to conceive rightly of the doctrine — *God made manifeſt in the fleſh.*

But the aſſertion, contained in the words of my text, ſeems to imply a contradiction to other parts of Scripture, which inform us, that men ſhall be judged by their actions, and not by their belief. The voice of inſpiration has declared to us: *What is required of thee, O man, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* JESUS CHRIST himſelf annexes a poſitive bleſſing, and even eternal happineſs, to the practice of virtue. He gives us a rule of moral conduct, which he aſſures us is equivalent to the whole of the law and the prophets. *If we love one another,* he tells us, *we are truly his* diſciples; and ſurely we cannot be his diſciples, and in a ſtate of reprobation. *True religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father,* ſays the apoſtle,

apoſtle, *is this: to viſit the fatherleſs and the widows in their affliction, and to keep ourſelves unſpotted from the world.*

Thus far may be urged, with ſome degree of plauſibility, againſt the ſtrict and literal application of the words in my text. It is indeed inconſiſtent with the beſt attributes of the Deity to condemn a creature for an involuntary crime; and I am ready to acknowledge, that belief is not always in the abſolute power of the will. But, ſhall we preſume to ſay, that the will has no power whatever over the underſtanding? Shall we ſay that there does not exiſt a certain perverſe ſpecies of infidelity, when the underſtanding is ſufficiently inclined to be convinced, but when pride, ſenſuality, ſelfiſhneſs, malice, or ſome other corrupt paſſion, prevents men acknowledging the conviction? Shall we ſay, in fine, that, if a ſyſtem of faith be held forth to our acceptance, which many have at firſt rejected, but, on a deep inveſtigation, have received and acknowledged,

we

we are without ſin, if, through indolence, conceit, or prejudice, we refuſe to beſtow upon it that candid attention and examination which its importance merits?

Let us remember, that the words under our conſideration were addreſſed immediately to the JEWS, to that *ſtiff-necked* and *ſtubborn generation*, who had ſeen the blind reſtored to ſight, the deaf to hearing, the lepers cleanſed, and even the dead raiſed up, by a miraculous power. Can we conceive that men, who were eye-witneſſes of ſuch facts as theſe, could refuſe their aſſent but through a degree of perverſeneſs and contumacy which could not fail to be ſinful? and, indeed, for this they are directly reproved by CHRIST: *If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had ſin; but now they have no cloak for their ſins.*

If we could conceive an unbeliever to exiſt, who, with an humble and a willing mind, heartily deſired and ſolicited the convictions of grace, who with candour laboured

boured to be ſatisfied, and ſubmitted patiently to the pains of inveſtigation, we have no reaſon to pronounce ſuch a man (if he demean himſelf according to the moral precepts of the Chriſtian law, and live in *righteouſneſs, and ſoberneſs, and charity)* utterly excluded from the hope of mercy. But, with which of our modern unbelievers is this the caſe? They are, on the contrary, men, for the moſt part, *led captive by divers luſts*, who ſeek in unbelief an excuſe for their depravity; or they are men, who, poſſeſſed of an overweening opinion of themſelves, endeavour ambitiouſly for renown by differing from others; who would acquire the reputation of learning, ſagacity, and wit, by the affectation of ſingularity.

Theſe perſons, who ſo obſtinately reject the teſtimony of the Scriptures, will receive a fact upon the evidence of a ſingle profane hiſtorian, nay, will ſometimes give unlimited credit to the moſt monſtrous fictions and abſurdities that ever

diſgraced

diſgraced the legends of a barbarous people.* But let any man, with coolneſs and candour, ſit down to the inveſtigation. Let him conſider, in all our reſearches after knowledge, how many things we are obliged to accept upon mere probability. The material world, and all its wonders, are indeed detailed to our view; but, how little do we really underſtand of the cauſes which produce this motion, life, order, and diſpoſition, which we daily behold? Let him aſk himſelf if there be any thing more wonderful, in all which the books of Revelation offer to our underſtanding, than all this which is continually ſubjected to the apprehenſion of our ſenſes. Let him remark the feeble efforts of man to account for the origin of this world, the in-

* Nothing can reflect more diſgrace on the human underſtanding than the avidity with which ſome of the ridiculous fictions of the Chineſe, concerning the antiquity of their nation, &c. have been ſwallowed by ſome of the modern infidels. Fictions juſt as worthy of credit as their miraculous ſtories of *Fohi eating up the moon*, &c.

conſiſtent and viſionary theories which philoſophers have invented, the eternity of the world, and the fortuitous concourſe of atoms. Let him examine well the traces of authenticity which are to be found in the ſcriptural records even of the earlieſt periods, and the ſurpriſing confirmation of them which is afforded by the beſt and oldeſt of the pagan teſtimonies. Let him compare theſe with other hiſtories, and with the fabulous accounts which bear a reſemblance to them; let him weigh and determine which wears the moſt ſtriking appearance of probability; let him conſider which is the copy, which the imitation, and which the original. Let him aſſume candour enough to make allowance for the antiquity of thoſe Scriptures; for the imperfect manner in which, at the beſt, many paſſages muſt be underſtood; the obſcurity in which many things muſt be involved, and the exaggerations with which others muſt be repreſented to us, in a ſtyle of compoſition uncommonly bold and poetical,

almoſt

almoſt totally obſolete at preſent, and ſo different from that to which we have been accuſtomed.

When he has contemplated the great appearance of truth (to ſpeak in the moſt modeſt terms) which ſuch an inquiry will reflect upon the ground-work and leading facts of the Scripture-Hiſtory, let him next advert to the nature and purpoſe of that revelation for which we contend. Let him remember, that its deſign is to meliorate, to purify, the ſoul; to convert men *from every evil word and work*; to diffuſe among them the principles of love, of peace, of every virtue conducive to the good of ſociety. Let him turn his eyes upon the conduct of thoſe from whom we received this religion. Let him mark its influence on the morals and the heart. Let him ſee the ſame men contending for the facts, *which they had ſeen and heard*, (facts, in moſt of which they could not poſſibly be deceived,) even at the peril of their lives:—blameleſs men, of the moſt unimpeachable characters,

characters, and uninfluenced by any temporal or ſelfiſh motive, indeed with every ſuch motive in oppoſition, *reſiſting unto blood*, and breathing out their laſt breath in the ſevereſt torments, without departing, in the ſlighteſt inſtance, from their former teſtimony. Let any man of common candour, any man of common ſenſe, patiently ſit down to ſuch an inveſtigation as this, and let him riſe an infidel if he can.

It is true, indeed, that the Scriptures ſtipulate a juſt, a holy, and a moral life, as eſſential to ſalvation; but where is this holineſs, this integrity, this purity, to be found out of the Chriſtian communion? To allege the purity of heathen morals is an abſurdity too groſs to be digeſted by any man converſant in the writings of the heathens. So little conſiſtency is there even in their ſpeculative ſyſtems, that ſcarcely any two of their wiſe men are agreed reſpecting the end, or buſineſs, of human life. Some placed the chief happineſs of man altogether in the gratifications of ſenſe: ſome in the

the viſionary purſuits of ambition and glory: ſome in total apathy and indifference: and an ancient author has enumerated upwards of *three hundred* different opinions concerning the great or principal conſtituent of human felicity.* The moſt unexceptionable of their moraliſts refuſe to the ſympathetic feelings, compaſſion and ſocial affection, the name of virtues; nay, have placed them in the claſs of foibles, if not of vices. Suicide was tolerated by all, and diſtinguiſhed as honourable and virtuous by the principal ſects of philoſophers. The moſt depraved of paſſions were not ſtigmatiſed as ſinful or diſgraceful: and the father

* For a complete view of theſe abſurd ſpeculations concerning the *ſummum bonum*, conſult LACTANTIUS *de falſa Sapientia*, particularly c. vii. and viii. a work equally eminent for ſound reaſoning, extenſive knowledge, and animated rhetoric. Patronage was almoſt upon the ſame footing in the age of Lactantius as we find it at preſent: this incomparable advocate for the truth of his religion was, as Dr. Jortin remarks, equally diſtinguiſhed by his learning and his poverty.

of *Stoiciſm*, that ſyſtem which reflected moſt honour on unenlightened nature, has not ſcrupled to apologiſe for obſcenity and lewdneſs. Peruſe with attention the reveries of Plato, and the ſcepticiſm of Tully; compare theſe, the beſt of the ancient moraliſts, with thoſe who have written under the ſanction of Chriſtianity; and mark what human reaſon, by its own efforts alone, has been able to accompliſh.

That thoſe illuſtrious perſons, who, without the light of revealed truth, conformed as far as conſcience directed, to the will of their Creator, ſhould fall into condemnation, Chriſtian charity will not allow us to ſuppoſe. It is perverſe and contumacious infidelity which is reproved, as being highly ſinful, in the words of my text: and, when we conſider attentively the ſubject, we cannot but acknowledge, that amiable conduct and virtuous actions can ſcarcely, in the nature of things, be conſiſtent with ſuch principles.

If

If we examine, with the moſt candid diſpoſitions, the lives of thoſe who have contumelioufly ſhaken off the yoke of CHRIST, ſhall we find reaſon thence to retract this concluſion? The man, who propoſes to himſelf no motive but temporal intereſt, or, at moſt, a certain myſterious notion of beauty and harmony, may indeed be coolly and deliberately good; but, in the tumult of paſſion, in the criſis of temptation, will he not ſee other intereſts which may impoſe upon his ſenſes? Will not his ideas of beauty alter? Will not the power of faſhion, the faſcinating influence of the multitude, diſturb the even tenor of his conduct?

As from the pernicious opinions and the graceleſs lives of the generality of unbelievers, ſo may the good providence of GOD protect all in this aſſembly from the bitterneſs of that death which is without hope in CHRIST. —— It is not in the bloom and vigour of health, — it is in the hour of adverſity, of ſickneſs, in the dark and gloomy

moments which precede his diſſolution, — that the tenets of the infidel are put to their proper teſt. The ſcene may indeed, in ſome inſtances, have been tolerably acted, where vigour and ſtrength of nerves might in ſome degree ſupport the deſpairing ſpirit, or when ſhame of the world, or the unbounded love of literary fame, prevented the diſcloſure of their real feelings. But the fatal cataſtrophes of ſome of the moſt noted unbelievers afford a moſt ſtriking and alarming leſſon, and a moſt powerful antidote againſt the contagion of their ſentiments.

Without entering into the abſtruſe ſpeculations concerning *faith* and *works*, I muſt confeſs, that, on the principles of common ſenſe, I am unable to ſeparate them. I do not ſee how it is poſſible to attain any high degree of moral perfection but on the principles of faith in CHRIST. On the other hand, I muſt conſider every immoral action, in a profeſſing Chriſtian, ſo far an inſtance of infidelity. If you believe the Goſpel, you

you muſt believe the promiſes of the Goſpel; if the promiſes, the threatenings alſo. To illuſtrate the poſition by a very plain example: — Suppoſe yourſelf proceeding in ſome trackleſs waſte, unconſcious and unſuſpecting of evil; and ſuppoſe ſome friendly ſpirit, in ſuch a ſituation, to accoſt you, and to warn you that a precipice lies directly before you, or that ſome immediate difficulty or danger impends over your head. If you have any reliance on the truth of his information, any confidence in his integrity, — in plain terms, if you believe him, you will alter your courſe. Thus, if CHRIST has aſſured you, that, by the irrevocable decree of Almighty GOD, eternal puniſhment be annexed to the practice of certain vices; if you believe in CHRIST, it is impoſſible to continue in the practice of theſe vices; and if, in this ſenſe, you do not believe in his divine authority and miſſion, you then, literally, and to all intents and purpoſes, *die in your ſins.*

SERMON II.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE INFIDEL AND THE ENTHUSIAST COMPARED.*

I COR. VIII. I.

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

THAT real knowledge ſhould be the object of the apoſtolic cenſure is 'not eaſy to believe, or that it could be meant by ſuch a reproof to check or to retard our progreſs in ſubſtantial improvement. True wiſdom has virtue for its object; humility and urbanity are its inſeparable companions. The beſt-informed of the ancients confeſſed it as the happieſt effect of their learning, that it enabled them to feel their own ignorance and incapacity: and the moſt enlightened minds have ever been the moſt candid.

* Preached, at RICHMOND, in Surrey, October the 12th, 1783.

There is no greater miſtake than to ſuppoſe human learning inconſiſtent with the tenets of thoſe who aſſert the truth and neceſſity of divine revelation. Not to ſpeak of the diſpenſation of nature, which imparted to us theſe intellectual faculties certainly with the intent that they ſhould not be unemployed, the importance of wiſdom, and its alliance with virtue, is openly aſſerted in almoſt every page of Scripture.* The choice of Solomon was approved by the Almighty, when he preferred the gifts of wiſdom and underſtanding to all the common ingredients of earthly felicity. GOD, by the mouth of his holy prophet, complains, *my people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge.* The ſcribes, and the preſuming ſectaries of the Jewiſh church, are reproved by our bleſſed LORD: *Ye do err, not* KNOWING *the Scriptures and the power of God.* In fine, the gifts of the Spirit ſeemed principally

* See the Proverbs of Solomon, paſſim, and all the didactic writings in both the Old and New Teſtament.

intended

intended to compenſate the want of temporal aſſiſtance; that knowledge and eloquence, which a confined education had denied to the firſt teachers of our religion, was ſupplied by a miracle: and yet *the choſen veſſel of God* was a man, who ſuperadded to the divine inſpiration, with which he was ſo copiouſly endowed, every aſſiſtance which human inſtruction could afford.

If we attend to the circumſtances under which the Epiſtle was compoſed, and obſerve carefully the former part of the verſe from which I have ſelected the words of my text, it will appear highly probable that ſomething is there implied like an ironical cenſure of the upſtart pride of certain new converts in the church of Corinth. *We know*, ſays the apoſtle, *that we all have knowledge.* We all have, or think we have, knowledge. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* Certain it is, that real knowledge can neither merit nor provoke ſo bitter a ſarcaſm; and the apoſtle's obſervation can only apply to that confuſed, ill-

aſſorted,

aſſorted, ſmattering kind of knowledge, which has for its motive vanity, for its object the blind and ſilly admiration of the vulgar and the weak.

Among the various pretenders to religious knowledge, there are two characters, which, as the two extremes, are generally conſidered in oppoſition to each other; but which, however they may ſeem to differ, are in principle much alike; and in one particular are too fatally agreed, namely, in the ſubverſion of real piety and eſſential virtue. It is difficult to ſay, whether pride and preſumption be more particularly the characteriſtics of the infidel or of the enthuſiaſt. The one believes himſelf qualified by nature to decide arbitrarily on every thing; and, what his ſhallow judgement cannot immediately comprehend, he thinks himſelf at liberty to treat with ridicule and contempt. On the other hand, the enthuſiaſt is apt to fancy that he is the peculiar favourite of heaven, and enlightened by the Spirit of GOD himſelf. If he has not particular

ticular revelations, he is at leaſt certain that he is poſſeſſed of ſome ſources of information ſo much ſuperior to the wiſdom of the reſt of mortals, that they can only be the effects of a ſecret inſpiration. In the pride of his heart, not content with looking down on the reſt of mankind as infinitely his inferiors, he affects a familiarity with his omnipotent Creator: and, while he purſues the illuſions of a diſtracted imagination, he thinks he has taſted at the very fountain of truth, and that he is ſelected from among the ſons of men to be the chief diſpenſer of the divine ordinances.

Each of theſe characters has a perfect reliance on his own righteouſneſs. The one rejects every aid of divine truth; the other relies altogether on an imaginary predilection of the Deity, and expects to reach the manſions of bleſſedneſs without a ſingle effort of his own. The one preſumes upon his exquiſite taſte for moral beauty and decorum, which however he reſerves as a myſtery only underſtood by himſelf, and never

never diſplays to the world in his practice; the other rejects the name as well as the ſubſtance of morality, and hopes confidently for ſalvation through a barren and unprofitable faith, which is not the parent of a ſingle virtue. The one extols his own diſintereſtedneſs, which enables him now and then to perform an action not entirely ſelfiſh, without (as he tells you) the fordid expectation of future reward; the other veils his ſelfiſhneſs under the pretence that good works are not eſſential to ſalvation, that a prayer is better than an alms-deed, and a ghoſtly exhortation a more generous office than a well-directed benefaction.

Each is a reſolute deſpiſer of others. The unbeliever is extremely laviſh of the epithets, ſelfiſh, ignorant, and hypocritical; the phariſee *thanks his God that* HE *is not as other men are.* The clergy are equally the ſcorn and deteſtation of each. The ſagacious infidel ſhrewdly diſcovers, that they are the drones of the ſwarm, who only prey upon the induſtrious part of the community; that

that a body of men, whoſe intereſt it is to conceal the truth, can never ſerve to promote real ſcience; that prieſts have, in all ages, been graſping and ambitious; that they have ſubverted empires, diſturbed the peace of families, perſecuted and oppoſed (he will not add, *ſometimes confuted*) ſuch liberal and acute reaſoners as himſelf. On the other hand, the fanatic ſaint is a jealous inſpector into the morals of the clergy. Secretly diſſaffected to the government of our church, he induſtriouſly endeavours to find a flaw in our demeanour. Every the ſmalleſt frailty is magnified into an offence of the moſt portentous aſpect. 'It is for 'the honour of CHRIST to expoſe unworthy 'and hypocritical prieſts.' A gloomy and captious temper has jaundiced his eye, and even virtues are faults under his inſpection. Is the victim of his animadverſion humble and condeſcending? 'He is a fawning hy-'pocrite, *a glutton and a wine-bibber, a* '*friend of publicans and ſinners.*' Is he poſſeſſed of a ſenſe of dignity, and conſcious of

of his virtue? 'He is a high-prieſt, and 'above that humble demeanour which 'becomes the diſciple of CHRIST.' Has he erudition or abilities? 'He truſts only 'to human learning, and is aſhamed of 'the Goſpel.' Does he endeavour to inform his hearers with a knowledge of the ſocial and domeſtic duties? 'He is a mere 'moral preacher, and ſtudies only the 'doctrines of paganiſm.' Is he argumentative? 'He is dry or declamatory:' and ſome fantaſtical myſtic, without education or principle, who has tacked together a few incoherent patches of Gentile philoſophy,* and adorned them with a dialect as motley as the matter, ſhall bear away the palm from the moſt accompliſhed preacher.

* There is not a tenet of the modern myſtics which is not borrowed from the Gnoſtic hereſy; and that was altogether founded on the reveries of the Eaſtern magi, with a few of the moſt abſurd doctrines of Platoniſm. Theſe principles have been tranſmitted from the firſt ages of the church, by a ſeries of fanatics, to the preſent times.

Each

Each has a jargon peculiar to himſelf; a ſcience of words, which he ſubſtitutes for ideas. Our profound philoſopher pretends to meaſure earth and heaven, to know the ſprings of nature, and the firſt movements of the material world. He gives names to effects, and imagines the cauſe quite within the ſcope of his comprehenſion. The ſecret counſels of the Deity, the moſt remote decrees of the divine Providence, are, if you will credit them, perfectly apprehended by ſome preſuming enthuſiaſts. They can limit the unbounded freedom of the divine will; they can define Omnipotence; they can judge his juſtice, and penetrate his moſt awful myſteries. The infidel affects to believe nothing but what, by his imperfect faculties, he underſtands, or pretends to underſtand; the enthuſiaſt approves nothing, thinks nothing worth knowing, but what paſſes man's underſtanding: and, while he eagerly preſſes forward to what *angels have deſired to look into*

to in vain, the duties of a man are beneath his attention.

To caution any in this aſſembly againſt the abſurdities of the former character would, I truſt, be unneceſſary. Thoſe of the latter are more conſiſtent with uprightneſs of intention. A ſplenetic diſpoſition, a miſtaken zeal, circumſtances or occaſions, or natural vanity, may frequently expoſe a good heart, eſpecially if united with a weak underſtanding, to the fatal infection. It is therefore my duty briefly to point out the means of avoiding a falſe and overweening opinion of ourſelves in what reſpects religion, and to impreſs upon your minds the great utility of the apoſtolic reflexion: *Knowledge* (ſuch knowledge as I have been deſcribing) *puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

In the firſt place, let us beware of fancying ourſelves more the favourites of heaven than the reſt of mankind; and let us, if we wiſh to form a true eſtimate of our own deſerts, judge

judge by our actions and not by our opinions. The Goſpel informs us, that, *without holineſs, no man can ſee the Lord*, that *every one that nameth the name of Chriſt muſt depart from iniquity*. The *ſlothful ſervant* was *caſt into outer darkneſs*; and yet we are aſſured, that, when we have done all we can, we are but *unprofitable ſervants*; that is, we have barely performed our duty. A falſe confidence in our own virtue and piety not only excludes repentance, but improvement: beſides that pride will generally be found to accompany it, as well as a want of charity; and to want charity is to want every eſſential of real Chriſtianity. It is departing widely from the example, as well as from the precepts, of the meek and lowly JESUS, to be ſevere or illiberal in our reflexions upon our fellow-mortals. He was merciful and candid towards his creatures; inſtead of expoſing, he wept over, their vices: and it is remarkable, there are ſcarcely any ſins which he openly reproves but ſpiritual pride and

affected ſanctity. St. Paul aſſures us, that, though we had *the gift of prophecy*, all other virtues, and *all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing*. Virtue and wiſdom are generally mild and condeſcending; but little minds are always captious and conceited. Let me add, (and I ſpeak it with all poſſible caution,) I have ſeldom known a good and ſincere Chriſtian who took pleaſure in defaming or reviling the clergy. Perhaps it would be for the intereſts of religion, if even ſome degree of reſpect were to be paid where it is not altogether deſerved; but this is an indulgence we do not look for at your hands; all we demand are the common rights of mankind, truth, honeſty, and candour. When lucrative rewards are not the lot of the ſtudious and induſtrious paſtor, it is ſurely hard to deny him the gratification and pleaſure of knowing that his endeavours are well accepted. Nay, with regard to yourſelves, the matter is not quite indifferent. That captious and diſcontented diſpoſition, which

which expects more from human nature than it is reasonable to expect, which magnifies petty omissions into enormous offences, which is only happy in the pursuit and discovery of blemishes and errors, or which creates faults where there are none, is by no means a disposition adapted to moral and religious improvement. Distrust, therefore, the inspiration or the emotion which is accompanied with a malevolent sensation, for it cannot come from GOD. Let your zeal, on every occasion, be according to knowledge, and Knowledge proceed hand in hand with her sister, Charity. There is no action of life that requires so much caution in the performance as censure. "Censure," says a finished writer, "is in season so very seldom, that it may "be compared to that bitter plant which "hardly comes to maturity in the life of a "man, and is said to flower but once in a "hundred years."

Secondly. Beware of the temptation of fancying yourself wiser, or better informed,

in ſpiritual concerns, than the reſt of mankind. *Except ye become as little children, ye can in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.* The pretence of imparting ſuperior knowledge was the artifice of Satan to undo our firſt parents: nor is there any reaſon to believe him now leſs active in inſpiring us with a falſe opinion of our own judgements, and in filling us with pride, faſtidiouſneſs, and contempt for others. I am far from wiſhing to reſtrain a well-directed ardour in that moſt important of ſtudies, that which reſpects our eternal ſalvation. I would only recommend, that this and every other work of religion ſhould be accompanied with a proper ſenſe of our own weakneſs and unworthineſs. When humility is loſt ſight of, it is to be feared that truth will not long remain in view. In the frame of GOD'S creation, there are many myſteries which the profoundeſt naturaliſt is unable to unravel: and, though the Scriptures be, in general, a plain and intelligible guide to happineſs and virtue, yet (as St. Peter well obſerves)

obſerves) they contain *ſome things, which the ignorant and unſtable wreſt to their own damnation.* The moſt exalted underſtandings, in whom the lamp of piety ſhone with the moſt unblemiſhed luſtre, aided by the moſt perfect knowledge of the original languages, and enlightened by all the information to be collected from collateral hiſtorians, (both which, give me leave to obſerve, are indiſpenſibly neceſſary to enable us to determine, with any degree of probability, on the difficult paſſages of Scripture,) have at laſt confeſſed themſelves but as babes, and have exclaimed, with David, *ſuch knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it.* But let not this, my brethren, abate our veneration for the ſacred volume; it inculcates maxims, and enforces duties, for which every reaſonable being has a capacity and a natural reliſh; in the obſervance of which, however, there are few but are ſome way deficient. Inſtead, therefore, of bewildering our minds in the purſuit of viſionary ſcience; let us attend to what all

may perfectly underſtand. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth: for, if any man think he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* If we cannot be angels in comprehenſion, let us be Chriſtians in practice. Let us be thankful to Almighty GOD for that ſhare of uſeful knowledge which he has been ſo bountiful as to impart, and which, in his proper ſeaſon, he will enlarge. Let us remember, and let it check our preſumption: *The Lord anſwered Job out of the whirlwind, haſt thou an arm like God, and canſt thou thunder with a voice like his? — How unſearchable are his judgements,* ſays the apoſtle, *and his ways paſt finding out!*

SERMON

SERMON III.

ON THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. *

LUKE XVI. 23, 24.

And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom. And he cried, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

SO ſevere a ſentence can ſcarcely fail to excite our attention, and to attract an inquiry into the nature of the crime.

* Preached, at the Foundling Hoſpital, March, 1785.

For the general outline of this Sermon I am indebted to MASSILLON. It is, however, no more than an imitation, and that a very free one, of the French orator. Probably the original may be much ſuperior; for it is, I think, without exception, the beſt ſermon in the French language: it would, however, have been too long for an Engliſh audience, if literally tranſlated.

This ſuffering ſinner, — Has he *bowed the knee to Baal?* Has he deſerted or blaſphemed the GOD of his fathers? Has he imbrued his mercileſs hands in the blood of the innocent? Has he feaſted on the ſpoils of the fatherleſs and widow? — Attend but to his moans, ye men of the world, ye who imagine that a ſoft and luxurious life is a life of innocence, and that barely not to do evil is fulfilling the Goſpel.

There was, ſays our bleſſed LORD, *a certain rich man.* — But he has added nothing odious or diſgraceful to this circumſtance. He has not told us that this man was indebted for his riches to flattery or any criminal means; or that he enjoyed with inſolence what by baſeneſs he had acquired. The ſilence of Scripture juſtifies us on this head. — He *was rich.* — He expended his wealth in a round of peaceful enjoyments; free from ambition, encircled with pleaſures, exempt from care: and how few are there at this day in the world who poſſeſs the goods of fortune in more innocent circumſtances?

cumſtances? Nevertheleſs, mark the firſt cauſe of his reprobation! *He was rich.*

He was clothed in purple and fine linen. Yet we do not learn that in his pomp he exceeded the limits of his revenue; that the tradeſman or artificer were ſufferers by his oſtentation and extravagance: we do not learn that he regarded his equals or inferiors with an eye of contempt, or that rapine was employed to nouriſh his vanity. *He was clothed in purple and fine linen.* — He loved parade and magnificence; and that, too, in an age when every thing contributed to this paſſion; when Religion herſelf was apparelled in the moſt gorgeous attire; and when piety was believed in a great meaſure to conſiſt in a ſplendid temple, and in the majeſty and ſublimity of exterior ceremonies.

He fared ſumptuouſly every day, continues the parable. But the law of Moſes had not, as yet, impoſed that rigid temperance which the purity of our religion recommends. *A land flowing with milk and honey* was

was one of the firſt promiſes made to the ſeed of Abraham, and one of their chief inducements to obedience. Nor do we find that this rich man is accuſed of having tranſgreſſed the law in this point, of having eaten of thoſe viands the Jewiſh lawgiver had prohibited, or broken through the rules of abſtinence his religion had preſcribed. *He fared ſumptuouſly.*— Yet we have no abſolute authority to charge him with gluttony. We are not informed that drunkenneſs or profaneneſs waited on his repaſts, or that ſlander or ridicule made a part of the entertainment; that from one ſcene of debauchery he ruſhed to another; that he added avarice to voluptuouſneſs, and ſallied from the board of intemperance to the gaming-table; that he there aſſociated with the moſt abandoned among mankind, and on the caſt of a die hazarded that which ought to have afforded ſubſiſtence to poor and induſtrious multitudes, that with which he was intruſted for very different purpoſes.

In

In fine, he is not upbraided with impiety or irreligion. He is not called a cruel maſter, an undutiful child, a faithleſs huſband, or a perfidious friend. He is not ſaid to have made uſe of his riches to corrupt the integrity of others; to ſeduce and ruin unguarded innocence; to vex and diſtreſs his neighbour, to obſtruct his projects, or to diſconcert his meaſures. He was not envious or inſatiable. He lived a life of eaſe and luxury; ſuch a life as is conformable to the notions of thoſe whom we denominate men of the world: a life, compared with that of many among us, blameleſs; — I ſhould ſay, praiſe-worthy.

To this ſtate of the queſtion you will doubtleſs oppoſe his hard-heartedneſs towards Lazarus, his inſenſibility to the ſufferings of thoſe beneath him. You will aſſert your own title to the mercy and favour of God, ſince you have ever attended to the lamentations of diſtreſs. — You have beſtowed much in charity. — To this I anſwer, ſuch a conduct is not without its merits;

rits; but charity is of a ſtill more extenſive nature. Unleſs you poſſeſs a ſoul *meek, gentle, patient*, not *vaunting itſelf, not puffed up; though you give half your goods to feed the poor, and though you give your body to be burned, it profiteth nothing.* Alms-giving is indeed a neceſſary duty, but it does not involve the whole ſyſtem of Chriſtian benevolence. However, let us inquire a little further into the crime of this unhappy though rich man, and perhaps we ſhall find ourſelves ſcarcely leſs culpable.

There was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate full of ſores, and deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Here is indeed a picture, at which the indignant ſpirit of humanity at once catches the alarm, and every virtuous affection of the ſoul is excited to pity and to condemn. The rich, voluptuous, and ſenſual man, ſeated at his table that overflows with delicacies, and inſenſible to the miſery of a fellow-creature, who is reduced to wiſh for a few crumbs to appeaſe

appeaſe the ſharpneſs of his hunger, — this is indeed a ſight monſtrous in the eyes of Religion and Charity. Nevertheleſs, if we examine a little more accurately, we ſhall find that our Lord does not repreſent the conduct of the rich man as an extraordinary and aſtoniſhing inſtance of barbarity, but as the ordinary proceeding of perſons in a ſimilar ſituation; the proceeding, in ſhort, of a man careleſs, indolent, and unreflecting.

Lazarus was a common *beggar*; and men are uſually leſs touched with the wretchedneſs of theſe, than with the indigence of thoſe who only petition in ſecret. We are apt to perſuade ourſelves, that their importunities are only artifices to attract the attention of the wealthy. In ſhort, moſt of thoſe conſiderations, which render us deaf to the intreaties of the common mendicants and wanderers that appear about our doors, might ſerve, in like manner, to make him deny the requeſt of Lazarus: and ſo far may ſerve in excuſe for that want

want of common compaſſion, of which we are perhaps too ready to accuſe him.

Lazarus *was laid at his gate full of ſores.* Such an object, though it may draw a tear from the eye of reflexion, is not always equally ſucceſsful in working on the feelings of others. Such an object, laid daily at their gate, would offend the delicacy and provoke the indignation of many of the *rich men* of the preſent age. They would order the odious ſpectacle to be driven from their ſight, and ſome inſolent miniſter of their cruelty would add reviling to diſappointment. But we do not read that the rich man in the parable ſo much as made uſe of an intemperate expreſſion.

Nor are we even informed that Lazarus made a perſonal application to the rich man. He *deſired*, or wiſhed, *to be fed with the crumbs.*—He perhaps was ſilent, and left his affliction, his infirmities, his ſores, to plead for him: while the rank and engagements of the rich man did not allow him leiſure to reflect on the miſery of a poor beggar.

beggar. And for this Abraham reproves him, as, one day or other, all the thoughtleſs and inattentive ſons of pleaſure and diſſipation will be reproved at *the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt: Lazarus was naked, and you clothed him not; he was ſick, and you viſited him not; he was an-hungered, and you adminiſtered not to him. — Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

You, who have not as yet taſted the bitter draught of adverſity; you, whoſe deſires are gratified at a wiſh; you, *who ſay to your ſoul, eat, drink, and be merry, there is much good laid up for thee for many years*; you, who live for yourſelf, and take no thought for the ſufferings of others: —— Should you, after this, be led to inquire to whom the parable under our conſideration is addreſſed, I anſwer, as the prophet to the king, *thou art the man.* — Thou haſt overſtepped the frugality and ſimplicity of thy anceſtors; thou haſt received *thy good things,*

things, and thou haſt made them ſubſervient only to the gratification of thy paſſions; thou haſt laid the foundations of thy happineſs upon earth; there haſt thou built a city; there haſt thou placed thy utmoſt confidence. Come, then, and aid me while I ſhift the ſcene; while, with the evangeliſt, we purſue this thy predeceſſor to that after-ſtate, where he is no longer clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares no longer ſumptuouſly, as he was wont. Attend, therefore, to the concluſion of the parable: *It came to paſs that the beggar died:* —— oppreſſed with years, with ſickneſs, and with penury, he ſinks beneath the burthen of calamity, and is conveyed, without pomp or ſolemnity, to the ſilent grave. But mark the change! *He was carried, by the angels, into Abraham's boſom*; to thoſe regions of bliſs, the final reward of virtue, fortitude, and patience. There his tears are wiped away, his afflictions are conſoled, his poverty is enriched, his humility is glorified, and his penitence rewarded with eternal felicity.

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The rich man alſo died, and was buried. Behold, then, every mark of oſtentation and magnificence which can accompany that laſt ſad ſolemnity. The whole city is in motion; his vaſt poſſeſſions are the theme of univerſal converſation; his profuſion and liberality are every where extolled: a train of affected mourners attend his bier; his relations ſtrive to eterniſe his fame by pompous titles and inſcriptions engraven upon braſs and marble: — in vain; for all his glory muſt die with him. His very name is not handed down to us: *For the memory of the wicked periſheth with him*, ſays the wiſe man; *and thoſe, who have ſought wealth and honours, are paſſed away*, ſays the ſon of Sirach, *and are become as though they had never been born.* But, though ſin is of this periſhable nature here below, it is of but too fatal a duration in another ſtate: for, the next place, in which we find the rich man, is *hell: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom; and he cried, and ſaid, Fa-*

ther Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. Such an image is too tremendous to dwell upon, and indeed I truſt there are none among you ſo inſenſible as to require it to be heightened by the colouring of rhetoric. Let us, therefore, once more revert to the firſt object of this diſcourſe, namely, an enquiry into the chief cauſe of his condemnation: and this appears, beyond all poſſibility of diſpute, no other than a LIFE of INDOLENCE, THOUGHTLESSNESS, EFFEMINACY, AND LUXURY; a life, unmarked with great crimes, but deſtitute alſo of virtues. Now, if ſuch a puniſhment awaited the diſciple of Moſes, under a groſs and carnal law, — what! think you that the diſciple of CHRIST, under a law which is purity and ſpirituality itſelf, will be more favourably received than the rich voluptuary under the Jewiſh diſpenſation? We are commanded *to be perfect, even as our* FATHER, *who is in heaven,*

ven, is perfect. We have an example, which we are bound to follow, our great and bleſſed Maſter. But is it imitating him, my brethren, merely not to commit adultery, murder, ſacrilege? Are theſe the bounds of Chriſtian virtues? Was CHRIST content with doing wrong to no man, with paying tribute to Ceſar, with not being accuſed of any enormous ſin? Did he not ſubdue and mortify all earthly affections? Did he not pray for his enemies? Did he not *go about doing good?* Was he not *meek and lowly of heart*, ſimple, diſintereſted, exact to fulfil the law to the minuteſt point? Did he *love the world*; he, who contradicted, fought, and overcame it? Did he promiſe ſalvation to the worldly; he, who has ſo repeatedly condemned them? Did he declare in favour of riches; he, who has execrated them? In favour of honours and dignities; he, who ſo ſtudiouſly, ſo conſtantly, avoided them? In favour of pleaſures; he, who deſpiſed them?

Behold, then, our model! and reſt aſſured, that, in proſperity or adverſity, in a court or in a cloiſter, unleſs we bear his image in our hearts, and are conformed to his likeneſs, we are in a ſituation but little preferable to that of the rich, but unfortunate, perſon, who has been the ſubject of this exhortation.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

ON THE NATURE OF HUMAN HAPPINESS AND THE MEANS OF ATTAINING IT.*

PROV. XIX. 3.

The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord.

PASSION, like an unſkilful artiſt, ſeldom preſents us with any but the moſt deformed of portraits. In the gloomy moments of ſpleen, or amidſt the keen anguiſh of diſappointment, the medium through which we ſpeculate is clouded and confuſed; it diſtorts while it magnifies. In this uncomfortable ſtate of mind, men have not failed to repreſent the world, and every fair and flouriſhing object which it contains, in the moſt diſguſting colours. They have depreciated its beauties; they have magni-

* Preached at St. Anne's, Weſtminſter, in September, 1785.

fied its deformities. All the powers of fancy, and all the pomp of words, have been exhauſted in the laudable taſk of perſuading us, that we are naturally and irretrievably miſerable, that *all is vanity and vexation of ſpirit.* And it muſt be confeſſed, that theſe moroſe and miſanthropical ſpirits have, at leaſt, fully enjoyed one gratification, the only one indeed of which their natures appear capable, that of believing, that the whole maſs of mankind is deſtined to experience the ſame unpleaſing ſenſations that haunt and diſtract their miſerable boſoms.

It is remarkable, however, that moſt of the inſtances, which are produced of diſappointment in the purſuit of happineſs, are taken from the conduct of the vicious or the imprudent. Thus Solomon, in enumerating the employments, which led him to the melancholy concluſion we have already noticed, ſcarcely mentions any one that was laudable and virtuous. *I ſaid, I will prove thee with* MIRTH; *therefore enjoy pleaſure. I ſought in my heart to give*

give myſelf unto WINE, *and to lay hold on folly. I made me great* WORKS, *I builded me* HOUSES, *I planted me* VINEYARDS. *I got me* SERVANTS *and* MAIDENS, *alſo great* POSSESSIONS *of* GREAT *and* SMALL CATTLE. *I gathered me alſo* SILVER *and* GOLD, *and the peculiar treaſure of kings. I got me* MEN-SINGERS *and* WOMEN-SINGERS, *and the delights of the ſons of men. — Whatſoever mine eyes deſired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy.* Here it is obvious, that every enjoyment, which he has ſpecified, is of a ſenſual and worldly nature; and, though, in the courſe of the deſcription, the royal preacher ſometimes adverts to his love of wiſdom, or, more properly, of ſcience, yet it is certain, that ſuch a purſuit is very inconſiſtent with the indulgence of licentious pleaſures, very inſufficient to afford ſatisfaction amidſt the tumults of paſſion and the enervating influence of continued diſſipation; and a little experience will eaſily convince us, that the man, who *ſeeks to give himſelf unto* WINE, *and withholds*

not his heart from any joy, will find but little opportunity, however he may retain the inclination, for the improvement of his intellectual powers.

But, becauſe happineſs is not to be attained by the acquiſition of wealth, by the joys of conviviality, or the blandiſhments of pleaſure, ſhall we raſhly conclude, that its exiſtence upon earth is altogether chimerical and deluſive? Shall the reſtleſſneſs and diſſatisfaction of the man of the world, or even thoſe inconveniences and afflictions, which are ſometimes the lot of the beſt of characters, lead us to conſider happineſs or enjoyment altogether as an imaginary phantom, that unceaſingly encourages and invites our approach, but as unceaſingly eludes our embrace? Surely, though the wilderneſs of the world preſents to the traveller many intricate and perplexing paths, ſtill it muſt be confeſſed that it affords ſome pleaſant ſpots, calculated not only for his repoſe and refreſhment but for his comfort and delight. God, indeed, has not ordained that

that we ſhould find in this terreſtrial habitation our abode and reſt, and conſequently has mingled our higheſt worldly enjoyments with ſuch a degree of imperfection as may ſerve to impreſs this great truth effectually upon our hearts; but, on the other hand, he has provided us with ſuch bleſſings and comforts as may enable us to go through our pilgrimage with cheerfulneſs and gratitude. He intended not to make our probation an uninterrupted ſcene of affliction, or that men ſhould arrive at glory only through the avenues of wretchedneſs and pain.

If we turn our eyes upon the virtuous part of the world, though it is not pretended that human life is or ought to be exempt from calamities, we ſhall find that happineſs greatly preponderates on the whole. Let us conſider but a few of thoſe innumerable ſources of pleaſure, which our HEAVENLY FATHER has opened for us with a liberal hand. Conſider the various advantages of ſcience; the inſtant delight that

that reſults from the ſucceſsful inveſtigation and diſcovery of truth; the ſublime pleaſure of thoſe high ſpeculations that lead to the contemplation of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; the ſweet and varied amuſement, in the inſpection of this vaſt chain of natural objects; the refined ſenſations, which attend the diligent ſtudy of moral beauty and fitneſs; the heart-felt ſatisfaction which accompanies the well-meant endeavour to enlighten and to meliorate our fellow-mortals; the enchanting proſpect, which is afforded by a cloſe and attentive view of the increaſing virtue of a good and wiſe man, even in this imperfect ſtate, in the expectation that his faculties will be ſtill further enlarged in that which is to come, and that, in ſucceeding ages, he will keep advancing *from glory to glory*.

It will perhaps be objected, that thoſe enjoyments, which enſue from the exerciſe of our intellectual faculties, are neceſſarily confined to a few, and therefore by no means applicable to the preſent argument.

But,

But, in reality, theſe form a very ſmall part of thoſe delights, of which our Creator has made us capable. Aſk the benevolent man, what were his ſenſations when the thankful eye dropped a tear of joy, or when the overcharged boſom heaved with ſilent gratitude? Inquire from him, whether he has not experienced true happineſs in aſſiſting the diſtreſſed, in comforting the dejected, in protecting the oppreſſed, in receiving *the bleſſing of him who was ready to periſh?*

This, however, would prove but little, if it led us to ſuppoſe happineſs and pleaſure confined to the ſuperior claſſes of mankind. The truth is, there are few ſtates of life, in which virtue and induſtry will not inſure a moderate portion of enjoyment. Let us inquire whether the humble cottager finds exiſtence altogether joyleſs and inſipid. View him, ſurrounded by his poor indeed, but happy, circle of friends, by his healthy and innocent offſpring, with the dear partner of his life, by whom every

joy

joy is increaſed, every ſorrow is alleviated. Does the morning call him to labour? It is for the ſupport of thoſe who are dearer than himſelf. Do the evening ſhades approach? They are the ſweet harbingers of domeſtic joy. He finds in labour an exemption from that ſpleen and chagrin which poiſon the happineſs of others; and derives from toil not only ſubſiſtence, but health.

It will perhaps be ſaid, again, that theſe are little better than poetical and imaginary deſcriptions, or, at moſt, the pictures of individual proſperity; that it would be more philoſophical to enumerate the particular ſources of happineſs, and to ſet them in oppoſition to the evils of life. Even here, were there time or opportunity, or were it poſſible to complete a catalogue which is almoſt endleſs, I am perſuaded the argument would not fail us. Gloomy indeed, and ſcarcely human, muſt be that breaſt, which refuſes to acknowledge the exhilarating influence of ſocial intercourſe; the

pleaſures

pleaſures of a well-earned reputation; or the inexpreſſible delights of virtuous friendſhip. Every elegant improvement of art, every beautiful and intereſting object of nature, preſents us with ſomething to cheer our ſpirits, to unbend our minds, or to diverſify our purſuits and enjoyments. But, ſuperior to all theſe, there is a ſource of pleaſure, my brethren, which (though hitherto but ſlightly glanced at in this diſcourſe) I doubt not you have very frequently adverted to; and that is, a holy confidence and faith in the good providence of our GOD and in the mercies of our REDEEMER. The benighted underſtanding or the unfeeling heart, that aſcribes to blind chance the diſpoſal of events, may, with reaſon, murmur or complain. The Chriſtian is a ſtranger to ſuch inconſiſtencies. He ſees his GOD in every part of nature; he feels his directing hand in its minuteſt operations. His life is one continued ſeries of admiration, of gratitude, of hope, of all thoſe amiable paſſions which

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are the true ſources of whatever felicity we can enjoy on this ſide the grave.

Our utility in this life (and conſequently our claim to another) depends ſo much upon our forming a juſt eſtimate of the powers with which we are entruſted for the good of ourſelves and others, that it is of importance to examine and to refute every erroneous principle which may in any reſpect affect the conduct of mankind. Of this nature is the fallacious maxim, "that "human happineſs conſiſts merely in "hope:" a maxim not totally devoid of foundation, but by no means true in the extent in which it is commonly underſtood. The propoſition ſeems to reſt upon an ancient error, namely, the ſuppoſition that human happineſs conſiſted chiefly in a ſtate of apathy or inaction. Now the direct contrary is the caſe, and man is never happy but when his faculties are employed. A ſtate of hope is a ſtate of engagement, of agitation, and activity; the ſtate, when we have attained our wiſhes, is a ſtate of indolence

lence and ſtillneſs. Hope is, therefore, in general, a happier ſtate than poſſeſſion, becauſe it diſpoſes to activity; but the axiom, "that *all* human felicity conſiſts in "hope," is by no means well founded; and, a more accurate way of expreſſing ourſelves would be to ſay, that every paſſion, which engages the mind in ſome laudable employment, or purſuit, contributes to the happineſs of man, ſince he is then fulfilling the will of his CREATOR and the end of his creation.

But, having, I truſt, ſufficiently evinced that happineſs is, in a conſiderable degree, the lot of humanity, even in this imperfect ſtate, let us, in the next place, proceed to a brief inquiry concerning that plan and ſyſtem of conduct, which appears moſt conducive to its attainment: that our hearts, no longer *perverted* by folly and illuſion, may ceaſe wantonly and wickedly to *murmur againſt the Lord.*

I. In the firſt place, therefore; it was, I think, evidently proved, in the former part

part of this diſcourſe, that the general cauſe of mortification and unhappineſs among mankind has been the fixing of their affections upon objects which were unworthy their regard, and expecting enjoyment from ſources whence it was not to be derived according to the nature of things. I muſt conſequently recommend to you to be particularly cautious on what principles you ſet out in your purſuit of happineſs, and to be certain that they are right. It has been objected to the Goſpel-ſyſtem of morality, that it neglects the bleſſings of the preſent life through a romantic attention to thoſe of a future, and intercepts the gratification of thoſe paſſions, with which the Almighty has endued us. Now, on the other hand, the beſt philoſophy even of the heathens has aſſerted, and I think has proved, that on the moderating and reſtraining of thoſe very paſſions depends the chief, if not the whole, of human happineſs: and I am convinced, that no rules ſo rational or ſo effectual can be deviſed, for the regulation

lation of the paſſions, as thoſe with which we are furniſhed by the Goſpel of CHRIST. — My advice is, therefore, on this rock to ground the baſis of your happineſs. What though the Goſpel command you not to *ſet your affections on the things of this world, but to deny yourſelf, and to give to the poor* :— The more diſintereſted you are, the fewer objects you will find to diſconcert or to deſtroy the tranquility of your ſoul. What though it enjoin you to meet evil and perſecution with cheerfulneſs: — Would you gain any thing by receiving them with murmurs and complaints? What though it recommend to you *to love your enemies* :— Could there be deviſed a better method to prevent your having any? The longer you live, and the more ſtrictly you examine theſe injunctions, the more of truth and wiſdom you will find in them. — Yes, my brethren, it is happineſs *not to love the world*; it is happineſs to *crucify the fleſh, with the affections and luſts*; it is happineſs *to be humble*. The Goſpel will inſtruct you,

not only what to do, but what to desire. This man, for instance, prays that he may obtain riches; you, who are a disciple of CHRIST, pray that you may not covet them. This man's state and condition is uneasy to his human feelings, and he prays to be released from it; but you, pray to GOD to give you strength and grace to bear your condition. Some pray that they may live long; but you, pray that you may not fear to die.

II. Next to your duty to God, let me recommend to you to determine seriously on fulfilling those duties, which you owe to your fellow-creatures; and one of the first of these is constant, useful, and laudable employment. Indolence produces spleen, repining, and despair; but activity is the parent of vigour, content, and enjoyment. It removes us from vice; it conducts us to virtue. It is not only essential to health, but almost to life itself. Complaints of the tediousness of existence proceed not from the lowly abodes of the industrious poor,

poor, but from the lofty palaces of the ſlothful. The SAVIOUR of the world has recommended activity to us, both by his precepts and example; nay, the neceſſity of it to earthly happineſs is ſo apparent, that the celebrated Impoſtor of the Eaſt, whoſe ſenſual laws indulged his followers in the unlimited gratification of their moſt vicious propenſities, has yet commanded each of them, however diſtinguiſhed by ſtation or abilities, to be educated in the exerciſe of ſome manual employment. The Chriſtian profeſſion is itſelf an active calling; and, if it require not all *to labour, working with their hands*, yet it implicitly demands, that we *ſhall not be weary of well-doing*, but *willing to diſtribute, and ready to communicate* to the diſtreſſes of all around us.

III. In the third place, though it is generally adviſeable to have one great object of purſuit, leſt the mind ſhould occaſionally ſink into languor and inactivity through the want of conſtant employment; yet there is no greater miſtake than that of fixing

our affections on a ſingle terreſtrial object, and ſuppoſing our happineſs to depend on that alone. So bountiful has our CREATOR been, ſo many pleaſurable objects and employments has he provided, that, if men will not ſuffer themſelves to be miſled by that great miſtreſs of miſtake, Fancy, or Opinion; * if they will not determine to imagine themſelves miſerable, unleſs poſſeſſed of ſome toy, or trifle, which they pleaſe to term a bleſſing; they may find reſources of pleaſure in almoſt every ſtate. Our happineſs (as far as it is merely temporal) is a fabric compoſed of diverſified materials, of a number of parts apparently trifling and minute. Great objects ſerve commonly to cheat and delude the hopes and expectations of thoſe who ardently purſue them; but their inefficacy to produce real comfort is almoſt proverbial. It is the part of true philoſophy, as well as of religion, to divert us from theſe vain at-

* See the Thoughts of M. Paſchal.

tachments,

tachments, which, by engaging every faculty of the ſoul, neceſſarily force us into exceſs, into vice, and into ruin. It is this violent adherence to one favourite paſſion or purſuit which has deluged the earth with blood; it is this, which has not only deſtroyed the peace of individuals, but of families and of ſocieties. When diſappointed in any fond purſuit, look around you with a philoſophic eye, and conſider how many ſources of amuſement and ſatisfaction lie elſewhere open to you. Determine to uſe them; force yourſelf from the wretched captivity, to which your imagination has reduced you, and try another ſcheme of enjoyment. Be aſſured that habit will be equally powerful in one caſe as in another: for, moſt probably, the very object you lament was not leſs the child of habit than of fancy. Nay, I have ſcarcely a doubt that you may ſtill find pleaſure, in thoſe things which are yet in your power, even ſuperior to that which you think you have loſt.

IV. Laſtly. To avoid the riſk of diſappointment, in your intercourſe with mankind take care not to expect too much. He, who hopes to find all things perfect in a world, which muſt of neceſſity contain a mixture of evil, moral as well as phyſical, will, of courſe, find himſelf in a ſtate of continual diſappointment. "What," ſays an ancient moraliſt, "is there new or "extraordinary, if ignorant or abandoned "perſons act conformably to their nature "or habits? You may repent your own "credulity, but Providence is not in an "error becauſe a miracle was not wrought "in your favour." You complain that virtue and merit are diſregarded. — In the firſt place, beware that you do not overrate your own merits: for, though theſe complaints are commonly made in general terms, yet they uſually center in ſelf. But, ſuppoſing your allegation well founded; — you are virtuous.——It is well;—it is your duty, your intereſt. It would certainly be better for ſociety if ſuch claims were more generally

generally attended to. But, as it is, you ought to be informed, that temporal gain is not the object of virtue. If you take proper methods, I mean induſtry and prudence, you will probably ſucceed in that more ſordid purſuit; and, before you raſhly conclude that you have miſſed of your deſired end, conſider, with ſome degree of candour, whether you have employed the proper means.

That an equal vein of happineſs or miſery runs through the various conditions of human life, I am far from aſſerting; and, that there are ſome real evils attendant on this tranſitory ſtate, I am ready to acknowledge: the principal of which, indeed almoſt the only evils that can be ſaid utterly to exclude enjoyment, are, the total deprivation of health, and extreme poverty. This, however, will not ſuffice to invalidate the doctrine of my text; for, it is enough to eſtabliſh the poſition, if I have proved, in the general, that the moſt powerful cauſes of uneaſineſs are our own folly, per-

verſeneſs, and indiſcretion. You have ſeen, that the great miſtake, in which mankind have been involved in their purſuit of happineſs, is that of ſeeking for it in the gratifications of ſenſe rather than of intellect, in following after earthly in preference to ſpiritual pleaſures. If we inquire with any degree of accuracy, we ſhall find, that thoſe, who have acted on the former plan, have ſeldom failed to be diſappointed; and, conſequently, that they conſtitute the majority of thoſe who arraign the diſpenſations of Providence, while the *voice of rejoicing and ſalvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.* Hence we ſhall probably be enabled to form ſome reaſonable conjectures concerning the true end and perfection of man, and his proper buſineſs on the theatre of life. And this, if the general tenour of this diſcourſe be true, muſt conſiſt in the cultivation and improvement of the ſpiritual part of his nature, in the refinement of his ſentiments, in the enlargement of his ideas, in converting and forming all the looſe and

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ſcattered principles and diſpoſitions of virtue into ſettled habits of the ſoul: in one word, in gradually fitting and preparing himſelf for the bleſſed ſociety *of ſaints and angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, and for thoſe ſublimer offices and functions, which he will be called upon to perform in *that heavenly city which is builded of God*, in the preſence of his *Creator, his Redeemer, and Sanctifier*; *when the faſhion of this world as a veſture ſhall be changed*; *when there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor pain, becauſe the former things are paſſed away*.

SERMON

SERMON V.

THE ORIGIN AND USE OF PRAYER.*

JOB XXI. 15.

What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?

FROM the remoteſt periods of antiquity, we find mankind eagerly aſpiring after the knowledge of their CREATOR, and anxiouſly endeavouring to pay him ſuch attention and worſhip as demonſtrates both a conſciouſneſs of his exiſtence and an apprehenſion of his power.

If it were neceſſary to draw the line between the thinking and the inſtinctive parts of creation, this perhaps would be the ſureſt mark by which to define the limits. Other ranks of being, confined by the phyſical neceſſity of their leſs perfect natures,

* Preached at Oakingham, September 19, 1784.

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can only expreſs the glory of their CREATOR in the beauty and propriety of their external form, and in the wonderful diſpoſition of Providence, which cauſes them, without the ſmalleſt deviation, and as it were involuntarily, to conform to their reſpective ends. In the moſt ſagacious of the animal creation we can diſcern nothing like a conſciouſneſs of its original: and it may be truly ſaid, that they exiſt in the world without the ſmalleſt reflexion whence they came or whither they are going; while man, in the moſt ſavage and unenlightened ſtate, has never failed to adopt ſomething like a code of religious belief. Wild and fantaſtical as his ideas may be, there is ſtill an exalted power of mind, which prompts to an enquiry into the nature and attributes of the moſt perfect of beings, and a generous confidence, which would cultivate a more intimate communication with him.

When a practice is general, there is more than a preſumption that it is founded in nature.

nature. Men, however, at different periods, have appeared, who, through that moſt dangerous paſſion, the affectation of ſingularity, have reſolutely determined to diſpute the propriety of whatever is common: men, who would fancy themſelves above the vulgar only becauſe they chooſe to differ from them; who would arrive at eminence, not by the paths of patient induſtry and uſeful ſcience, but by the devious track of conjecture and fancy.

It may leſſen, in ſome degree, the conſequence of the ſelf-created philoſophers of the preſent day to be informed, that their diſcoveries and objections are neither new nor extraordinary. There were men, even in the days of Job, who could ſay to the Omnipotent Deity: *Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?* and into this ſimple queſtion may all the objections of infidels againſt the expediency of religious worſhip be reſolved.

What

What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? The fabric of the univerſe, with the vaſt variety of creatures which it contains, ſufficiently inform us, that ſome firſt cauſe muſt have called them forth into exiſtence; and the order, beauty, deſign, and artificial arrangement, of the ſeveral parts of creation, ſpeak this cauſe to have been intelligent. The power of the CREATOR is no leſs evident than his wiſdom; and his benevolence and mercy are among the moſt apparent and moſt ſplendid of his attributes. — This is the Almighty. Now, a Being ſuch as this, all-powerful and all-wiſe, muſt of neceſſity excite the admiration of a reflecting creature. A Being, ever merciful and beneficent, cannot fail to attract his gratitude; and a Being, on whom our exiſtence, and that of univerſal nature, depends, cannot poſſibly be thought upon without ſome degree of reverence and awe. The complex of theſe ſenſations is worſhip, which, whether we will or not, we muſt pay to him, if we but ſuffer ourſelves

ſelves to reflect upon him. It is perfectly agreeable to the law of our nature to appropriate ſome part of our time to this reflexion; and it is equally natural to demonſtrate, by ſome external ſigns, thoſe emotions which it ſpontaneouſly excites in our hearts.

In trouble or uneaſineſs, it is impoſſible to know that ſuch a Being exiſts, and not to breathe a wiſh that he would ſtretch forth his almighty arm to help and comfort us. The heart muſt be devoid of every finer feeling of humanity, that can taſte the bounties of his hand, and not be warmed with gratitude and with love. Shall we, therefore, give utterance to our affections, or ſhall we ſtifle every riſing emotion of goodneſs? Which is moſt congenial to the human feelings? which is moſt likely to promote habits of ſympathy and ſocial virtue?

With reſpect to the ſecond object of inquiry, *What profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?* we have no authority to think that the decrees of INFINITY will be altered by

by the intreaties of a mortal: *The* LORD *is not a man, that he ſhould repent.* But it is an old and a common maxim, that the favour which is not worth aſking is not worth conferring. If the aſſiſtance of the Deity be deſirable, why ſhould we not implore it with a becoming humility? Such a conduct will, at leaſt, demonſtrate us not utterly unworthy the attention of the Almighty; it will evince, that we put our truſt and place our dependance on him; it will evince, that we do not *forget* GOD; and, if the particular bleſſing which we ſupplicate be on good reaſons denied us, he will not be unmindful of us in his proper ſeaſon.

But, a more evident advantage of prayer is the leſſon of inſtruction it affords ourſelves. I confeſs I ſhould be much inclined to doubt that man's practice, whoſe faith is imperfect or unſtable; and his faith is queſtionable at leaſt, who neglects the duty of prayer. Prayer ſerves to keep alive in our minds a proper ſenſe of the exiſtence

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of a GOD, and of his divine attributes. It warms the heart with his praiſes, and animates the affections with the enthuſiaſm of virtue. It is of the utmoſt importance to a religious life, frequently to meditate on our paſt conduct, and to inſpect the faithful record of our conſcience; and this we are obliged to do, if we confeſs our ſins before GOD. The very hope of obtaining our petitions will naturally engage us to render ourſelves agreeable to the Diſpenſer of every good and perfect gift, by a ſtrict conformity to his precepts, and by a pure and uniform practice of virtue. Beſides this, there is ſcarcely a ſingle prayer in our excellent Liturgy which is not replete with moral inſtruction.* The uſe and deſign of

* One of the moſt common objections to a liturgy (though I think the fact may be very reaſonably queſtioned) is, that a compoſition, to which the ears of the congregation are much accuſtomed, is not ſufficiently intereſting to keep alive the attention. This, however, is, I think, amply counterbalanced by another circumſtance, which is, that theſe prayers are generally impreſſed upon the memory of the people; and, as every prayer contains ſome precept or doctrine,

a Liturgy has been canvaſſed with much ardour, and with no leſs acrimony, by ſome zealous diſputants of the laſt century. But thoſe, who plead againſt forms of prayer, do not ſeem to recollect, that there is but one ſet of ideas, and that very limited, which may be addreſſed to the Deity on general ſubjects and in a public aſſembly: and, to ring changes upon words only is of no advantage, and can be little gratification to a rational perſon. It ſeems proper, alſo, that a congregation ſhould have ſome previous information of what nature the prayers are, in which they are expected to join. Every miniſter of the Goſpel is not of equal capacity, nor are all of diſpoſitions equally amiable and ſedate. It muſt be, to ſay the leaſt, a diſagreeable thing to hear petitions offered up to the Deity in our names, and in which we are ſuppoſed to unite, which ſhock our underſtandings

trine, moral or religious, their underſtandings are, by theſe means, furniſhed with a variety of uſeful ideas, which cannot fail to recur on different occaſions in life.

by

by their abſurdity or unſeaſonableneſs. Leaſt proper of all muſt be extempore prayer. When we preſume to addreſs the great Author of Nature, the *all-wiſe* GOD, every ſyllable ſhould be duly weighed, and the greateſt caution ought certainly to be obſerved. It is a reſpect we owe to GOD, and it may prevent ſome great indecorums, if not appearances of actual impiety.

Public worſhip is a decent, ſocial, act of duty; nor can the whole compaſs of nature afford, in my opinion, a ſight more intereſting, and even ſublime, than a devout congregation uniting in the praiſes of their infinite CREATOR. As for private devotion, thoſe, who have tried its efficacy in affliction, ſolitude, or ſickneſs, can beſt ſpeak for the comforts which it has always afforded. There is a ſet of men, who will ſcarcely underſtand this language; but I believe the ſincere and devout Chriſtian would not reſign his pleaſures for all that ambition or ſenſuality could beſtow.

Before I conclude, I ſhall beg leave to point out one or two of the abuſes of prayer: for, the beſt of inſtitutions have ever been abuſed. The firſt is, when men ſubſtitute the mere EXTERNALS of worſhip for that ſincere and ſpiritual ſervice which is required of us. *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* This is literally a mockery of our MAKER, and, believe me, is much better let alone. True devotion is of the heart; every nerve muſt feel, the affections muſt be excited, the mind muſt be purified of every earthly taint. The Phariſees were ſtudious *to clean the outſide of the cup and platter*; they *made long prayers*; they prayed frequently, fervently to appearance, and *let their light ſhine before men:*— But, for all theſe things, we are aſſured by CHRIST himſelf, *they ſhall* only *receive the greater damnation.* And you, my brethren, who think yourſelves religious, beware of ſpiritual pride. The *Phariſee thanked his* GOD *that he was not as other men are.*—But the Publican, *who dared*

ſcarcely

ſcarcely to lift up his eyes to heaven, but ſmote his breaſt, and cried, *God be merciful to me, a ſinner! went to his houſe juſtified rather than the other.* Believe me, one ſingle grain of Chriſtian charity, one ſingle devout ejaculation, accompanied with any act of ſympathy and benevolence, is worth a whole life ſpent in cold (I could almoſt call it hypocritical) prayer. Not that I would be underſtood to diſcourage your devotion; I would only caution you againſt miſtaking its true end, which is to engage the heart more warmly in the ſervice of its CREATOR, and to prepare it for fulfilling more effectually the active duties of Chriſtianity.

The other error, againſt which I eſteem it my duty to admoniſh you, derives its origin from that great miſtreſs of craft and deluſion, the Church of Rome. To increaſe the treaſures of her prieſts, ſhe ſtrenuouſly endeavoured to promote the opinion, that ſhe had eſtabliſhed a kind of traffic with GOD, who might be laid under obligation; and that the righteouſneſs of one man

could atone for the ſin of another. Unhappy criminals relied on the abſolute power of the church to forgive ſins, and the confident reprobate went forward in his career of depravity without compunction or remorſe. A prayer on his death-bed, the ſacrament, or ſome ceremony of even leſs importance, was ſuppoſed effectually to cleanſe his polluted ſoul; or a maſs, celebrated after his deceaſe, miraculouſly unbarred the gates of heaven. I have remarked it even in this country, and with no leſs regret than aſtoniſhment, that an opinion is prevalent, and eſpecially among the uninformed part of mankind, that the prayers of a miniſter, or the receiving of the ſacrament, are effectual means of reconciliation to GOD, even upon a death-bed, however the account may ſtand between the ſinner and his conſcience. I intreat you, my brethren, with as much affection as ſincerity, be miſled by no ſuch artifices of your ſpiritual enemy. They are deluſions, and of the moſt fatal kind:

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to rely upon them is trifling with your deareſt intereſt, your eternal ſalvation. Let the man, who ſuſpects his diſſolution to be at hand, inſtead of ſending for the prieſt, and expecting from his prayers abſolution and forgiveneſs, — let him ſend for every perſon whom he has injured in thought, word, and deed; let him, if he would obtain pardon and reconciliation, if he would render himſelf really acceptable with GOD, make the moſt perfect reſtitution in his power; let him repair every wrong, and heal the heart which he has wounded with the envenomed ſhafts of falſehood, injuſtice, cruelty, and ingratitude. This is indeed a duty which ought not to be deferred to the laſt ſtage of exiſtence, but which ought to take place as ſoon as you are convinced of its neceſſity. There is but little chance that at the cloſe of life you will have an opportunity; and, at all events, a death-bed repentance is generally very imperfect: without preſuming to limit the mercy of the Almighty, to ſay the moſt of it, its

effects are doubtful; and who would ſtake his eternal happineſs on a doubtful iſſue? But, above all things, beware of the deceitful, the deſtructive hope, that a fruitleſs prayer, or an empty ceremony, will blot out your tranſgreſſions and inſure your ſalvation.

On the whole, the duty of prayer is a natural, a ſalutary, a delightful duty; but, unleſs it be accompanied with a good life, it is bloſſom without fruit. It is not religion; for, religion is a conſiſtent whole, formed out of a variety of correſpondent duties, which promote and conſpire with each other; and the want of any of them deſtroys the beauty and utility of the whole machine. The true worſhippers muſt *worſhip* GOD *in ſpirit and in truth*; and I am ſure, if you addreſs him with ſincerity, you will not heſitate to obſerve his commandments.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

THE ESSENTIAL DUTIES OF MORALITY.*

MICAH VI. 8.

He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

THERE is great reaſon to believe, that the paſſage, from which I have ſelected my text, made a part of that famous reply of the Prophet Balaam to Balak, the King of Moab, the occaſion of which is related at large in another part of Scripture. It may therefore be conſidered as one of the moſt ancient ſpecimens of didactic or ethical compoſition extant; and affords a proof, not leſs ſatisfactory than curious, of the ſuperior knowledge, re-

* Preached, at St. Peter's, Liverpool, September, 1780.

finement,

finement, and civilization, which diſtinguiſhed the worſhippers of the true GOD, in oppoſition to the barbarity and ignorance, which pervaded the idolatrous nations. In the paſſage under our conſideration, and in that immediately preceding, the prophet ſeems to aſſume merely the character of an hiſtorian: *Remember*, ſays he, *what Balak, King of Moab, conſulted, and what Balaam, the ſon of Beor, anſwered him, from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord*, (or that righteouſneſs which is acceptable to the Lord.) He then proceeds to ſtate with how much ſolicitude and anxiety the ſuperſtitious monarch inquires concerning the means of obtaining the favour of GOD: *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high* GOD? *Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul?* The prophet anſwers,

anſwers, in the ſhort and ſententious language of the times, as if he had ſaid: — "Thou art miſtaken, O man, in thy conception of the divine nature and attributes.—Know, that theſe things, which thou ſo liberally offereſt, are not thine own; they are the gifts of Providence, the ſplendid appendages of thy ſuperior ſtation in life. The Lord, JEHOVAH, requires a more worthy ſacrifice, and one which will more effectually demonſtrate the ſincerity of thy devotion."— *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy* GOD?

In theſe words is contained a beautiful compendium of the moral duties of life, and they might ſerve as a plan or ground-work of a complete ſyſtem of ethics; ſuch a ſyſtem will hardly be expected within the limits of a ſhort diſcourſe: ſome of the leaſt trite however, though perhaps not leaſt uſeful, obſervations on theſe ſubjects may

may be reduced within a narrower compaſs; and it was with this deſign that I ſelected for your conſideration the words which I have juſt recited.

To do juſtly is the firſt virtue ſpecified by the inſpired author; and indeed it has been not improperly accounted the baſis of all other virtues. It is not only neceſſary to conciliate confidence and truſt in every private connexion, but is ſo eſſential to the exiſtence of ſociety, that one of the moſt correct moraliſts of antiquity has well obſerved, that not even a company of banditti or a band of pirates could ſubſiſt without ſome rule of juſtice eſtabliſhed among themſelves.

The nature of juſtice may, at firſt ſight, appear too evident to require explanation; and perhaps it would be ſo, if the juſtice eſſential to a Chriſtian life conſiſted merely in walking within the verge of the law, or even according to the common principles of equity and fair-dealing. But the juſtice of a Chriſtian muſt go beyond this.

this. Every moral virtue, in the poſſeſſion of the diſciple of JESUS, alters its nature, and becomes different from what it would have been in the poſſeſſion of any other man. I ſhall not, therefore, detain you with enumerating thoſe actions, that are marked as breaches of juſtice by the laws of every civilized community. I ſhall only make a ſingle obſervation on this topic, which, as it may be uſeful, cannot, I think, be conſidered as altogether unſeaſonable. Men are, in general, prompted by two motives to the commiſſion of crimes. The firſt is the opinion, that the action, they are about to commit, may prove ſuch as not to lead them beyond the boundaries of law; and conſequently that it may be conſiſtent with their own ſafety, though not with the principles of equity. Or, ſecondly, though the crime be puniſhable by law, they are miſled by the expectation of eſcaping the ſword of juſtice by extraordinary cunning and vigilance. Theſe are both found, however, to be miſtaken principles. Be aſſured,

aſſured, that to depart from the ſtrictneſs of honeſty and equity is always unſafe. A man ſets out with an intention of injuring his neighbour, but with a full reſolution to commit nothing for which he may become amenable to law: but a ſanguine temper, fluſhed with ſucceſs; or, on the other hand, unexpected impediments, which he thinks a ſmall infringement on the laws of his country may remove, or ſome ſimilar motive, may allure him forward to inevitable ruin. With reſpect to the other motive, the ill ſucceſs of almoſt every man, who has been hardy enough to attempt a violation of the laws of civil ſociety, is a ſufficient refutation: they, too, flattered themſelves with the hope of eſcaping by ſuperior cunning. The truth is, there are ſo many trivial circumſtances, on which the ſecrecy of every action depends; and human ſagacity is ſo imperfect, ſo unable to provide againſt every little contingence, that it always happens ſome loop-hole is left

left open, ſome little clue is conſtantly found, which leads to detection.

I intimated that the nature of juſtice, though commonly ſuppoſed to be one of the plaineſt principles in morals, is in general but imperfectly underſtood; and I fear it is a melancholy fact, that not individuals only, but whole nations, and thoſe the moſt enlightened which the preſent (or perhaps any) ſtage of ſociety can exhibit, will be found, on an accurate inſpection, miſerably ignorant of the principles of this virtue. A virtue, which indeed appears to dwell more upon our lips than in our hearts; and ſerves to grace our converſation, but is not ſeen in our practice.

Not to ſpeak of that rapine which has diſhonoured the name of Britain in the Eaſt, — and which, becauſe it has involved the fate of a few of thoſe who are ſtiled the rulers of the earth, has been more a topic of declamation than ſome ſtronger inſtances of oppreſſion, that only affect inferior multitudes,— if we turn our eyes to that ſcene

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of unparallelled cruelty and injuſtice which univerſally diſgraces our poſſeſſions in the Weſt, ſurely we ſhall find this melancholy reflexion too fatally verified. When we conſider the unhappy and unmerited fate of thouſands, forced by violence from that home, which, however rude and inelegant, has always charms to intereſt the paſſions of men; the tender wife inhumanly torn from the embraces of her huſband; the parent deprived of his child; every delicate connection, every tender tie, that conſtitutes the felicity of human life, rudely burſt aſunder: * When we conſider theſe unhappy fugitives, for ever removed from that country where all their happineſs was centered, for ever removed from the

* "During their tranſportation from Africa, three or four "hundred are uſually confined in the hold of a ſhip, where a "peſtilential air, bad proviſions, the regret of being forced "from their kindred and friends, and, not ſeldom, diſ-"eaſes, which they acquire from our people, make dread-"ful havock." See *Eſſays hiſtorical and moral*, p. 304. and MR. RAMSAY's Tracts on Slavery.

aſſiſtance

assistance of those whose affection and cares might serve to lighten the burthen of calamity; when we regard them, exposed to hunger,* to fatigue,† to the utmost inclemency of seasons, perishing under the lash,‡ or during the infliction of tortures, at the bare idea of which every feeling of humanity revolts; — what, but ignorance

* "The allowance of food, on the plantation, is seldom "more than a pint of beans or Indian corn *per diem*: in "some plantations, indeed, they are allotted a spot of "ground for their subsistence, which they must cultivate at "those hours that ought to be appropriated to sleep." *Ib.* 308.

† "The hours of labour are *sixteen*, and at the very least "*fourteen*, out of the *twenty-four*; and the exertions which "are required are frequently more than their natural "strength or constitution will bear." *Ib.*

‡ "During the greater part of their labour, they are "exposed to the intolerable rays of an equinoctial sun. The "pregnant wretch, who droops with weakness and fatigue, "and the miserable convalescent, untimely summoned "from the bed of sickness, are equally subjected to the in-"clemency of the elements and the wanton cruelty of their "*drivers*." *Ib.* N. B. These assertions are proved, in the above Essay, (which has never been controverted,) by particular facts.

of the virtue of juſtice, ſhall we ſay, can induce a great and generous nation to behold theſe enormities with a callous indifference? What, but a total ignorance of the very principles of juſtice, can influence a legiſlature, celebrated for its attention to the rights of mankind, to authoriſe by its ſanction a plan of cruelty, which even the tyrants of old would have contemplated with amazement;* to mould oppreſſion into

* The following is literally extracted from a common news-paper.

"*New-York, July* 12, 1785. We learn, from Provi-
" dence, that a negro, belonging to Mr. Barron, having
" eloped, ſuch a purſuit was made after him, that he
" thought proper to return. It is the practice of runaway
" ſlaves, in Providence, to beſmear themſelves with greaſe,
" ſo that it is almoſt impoſſible for their purſuers to hold
" them. Thus beſmeared, and armed with a large knife,
" Mr. Barron received information of the ſlave being in
" negro-quarters. As it was determined that he ſhould be
" puniſhed, his maſter, Mr. Car, and Mr. M'Kinnon,
" went into the quarters to ſecure him. Two of the com-
" pany went into the quarters, whilſt Mr. Car guarded the
" door. The fellow, being thus at bay, made a deſperate
" effort to get away; but, being ſeized by Mr. Car, he
" drew

into a ſyſtem; to deny to mortals formed like themſelves the ſame equal protection;* to ſtamp murder with impunity, and even

" drew a concealed knife, and ſtabbed the unhappy gentle-
" man to the heart, ſo that he inſtantly died. Mr. M'Kin-
" non purſued him, and would have ſecured him but for the
" greaſy condition of his ſkin. In ſtruggling with him,
" he received ſeveral gaſhes, ſome of them ſo well directed,
" that, if the knife had not been previouſly blunted in
" ſtabbing the other gentleman, he muſt inevitably have
" fallen. Aſſiſtance providendially coming up, the fellow
" was ſecured, and brought to a ſummary trial, when he
" received ſentence to ſuffer death. He was immediately
" led to execution, and had his *hand ſtruck off*, which he
" bore with an indignant firmneſs; *but, his mutilated*
" *bleeding ſtump being immerſed in boiling pitch, he appeared to*
" *feel the torments of the damned. He was now thrown into*
" *the hot pitch*, and then hanged."

" Gibeting alive is the common puniſhment. I knew a
" gentleman, who had ſeen, in Antigua, ſome of theſe
" wretches exiſt on the gibbet to the ninth day, with a loaf
" of bread hung at the end of the gibbet to inhance the
" torture." *Eſſays hiſtorical and moral*, p. 310.

* " If a negro kill a white man, even through paſſion or
" miſchance, the inevitable puniſhment is death. If a
" white man murder a negro, he is only mulcted with a
" ſlight pecuniary penalty, which yet is ſeldom, if ever,
" exacted." *Eſſays hiſtorical and moral*, p. 311. The negro is not tried by his *peers*, but by his *maſters*. Indeed, three

to hold forth encouragements and temptations to that firſt of crimes? *

Let the ſlave-holder or the ſlave-merchant peruſe with attention the ſacred dictates of Almighty Juſtice. Let him read, that whoever, in any form or manner, directly or indirectly, ſhall cauſe the *death* or miſery of a fellow-creature, will, at the laſt great day, be called to the ſevereſt account. Let him read the awful ſentence pronounced by the mouth of ALMIGHTY GOD: *Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of* even *every beaſt will I require it, and at the hand of every man's brother will I require*

three juſtices of the peace may, at any time, condemn a negro to the moſt cruel death.

* "Authors on this ſubject have remarked the cuſtom "of advertiſing a higher reward for the head of a fugitive "negro than for taking him alive." *Ib.*

"As government always pays the full price for any ne- "gro who ſuffers death upon conviction of felony, when "an unprincipled planter has an old negro who is paſt his "labour, the planter takes care to ſtarve him till he is re- "duced by hunger to a ſtate of deſperation; ſome proviſion "is then laid in his way, in order to tempt him to ſteal, "&c." *Ib.*

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the life of man. Let him ponder this, and let him (if he be a man poſſeſſed of any ſenſe of religion) reflect on the innocent multitudes, whom he has been the means of bringing to an untimely and miſerable end;* let him then, IF IT BE POSSIBLE, ſilence the reproaches of his conſcience, and reſt tranquil and ſatisfied under the apprehenſion of that juſtice, which *will render to every man* (exactly) *according to his works.*

Theſe are among the more glaring breaches of juſtice; but there are others, leſs notorious, which yet, if we will examine with the attention and accuracy that become a believer in the truths of the Goſpel, we ſhall find totally inconſiſtent with the practice of a Chriſtian. The compilation would indeed be voluminous which

* "I am confident I am *below* the truth, when I ſay that "not leſs than *one-fifth* of theſe victims of avarice are mur- "dered in their paſſage; and, an infallible proof of the "cruelty of the trade is, the vaſt ſupplies annually re- "quired to ſupply the conſumption, which, I think, Ray- "nal eſtimates at about a *ſeventh.*" *Ib.*

ſhould exhibit a complete catalogue of theſe. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that not only every ſpecies of fraud or deceit, but whatever, in writing or converſation, in word as well as action, may detract from the peace and happineſs of your neighbour, is a direct offence againſt this cardinal virtue. Not only to invent a ſlander is criminal in this reſpect, but to propagate it. Men little imagine, that they are expoſing themſelves to the diſpleaſure of the Almighty by receiving and promulgating every idle report or anecdote. But remember, that, to mention any thing to the diſadvantage of another, without at the ſame time diſcovering your author, without explaining the grounds and reaſons of your opinion, is pledging yourſelf for the authenticity of the report; and, you may depend upon it, you are ſcarcely leſs culpable than the original author, and will have to anſwer for it where *every idle word is to be accounted for*.

Another circumſtance permit me, while I am upon this ſubject, to caution you againſt,

gainſt, ſince it is one of the moſt common and moſt dangerous of temptations: I mean, the abuſe of power. Beware of on any occaſion oppreſſing thoſe beneath you; for this is a complex crime, in which cruelty is mingled with injuſtice. Act better towards that uſeful body, the labouring poor, than even ſtrict juſtice would require. Pay them not only honeſtly, but generouſly; not only faithfully, but punctually; and let not the hand, which calls itſelf the votary of juſtice, hold back, even for an hour, the ſcanty pittance of the labourer. To defer the payment can be little gain to you, but may be infinite loſs and inconvenience to him: *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired ſervant, that is poor and needy; and at his day thou ſhalt give him his hire; his wages ſhall not abide with thee all night unto the morning; for, he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it; leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.*

It is remarkable, that, among the numerous moral precepts of the Goſpel,

there are ſo few directly explanatory of the nature of injuſtice, while it forms a principal topic in other ſyſtems of ethics. The truth is, our LORD could imagine no ſuch defect in any perſon who aſſumed the character of his diſciple. The man, who *does not love the world*; the man, who *has crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts*; the man, *who hates and abhors covetouſneſs*; who *loves the* LORD *his* GOD *with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength, and his neighbour as himſelf*; cannot be a villain. Thus, the whole of the Goſpel is a proviſion againſt the poſſibility of injuſtice, even in thought; *and every one that nameth the name of* CHRIST *muſt depart from all iniquity.*

To repair thoſe breaches of ſocial happineſs, which the injuſtice of ſome may have occaſioned; to *heal the broken-hearted*; to dry the tears of the mourner; to unite mankind by the gentleſt bonds, thoſe of gratitude and affection, the Deity has infuſed into the human ſoul an emanation from his own eternal eſſence; this moſt noble principle he has

has called MERCY: and *what doth the* LORD *require of thee, but to do juſtly and to love mercy?* But neither is the nature of this precept well underſtood, nor is it limited in its operation. Mercy (as well as every other Chriſtian virtue) muſt be formed into a habit of the ſoul, and muſt extend to every part of our demeanour. We can ſcarcely form a fair eſtimate of the virtue of any man from that part of his conduct which is reſtrained and regulated by law and cuſtom; we can ſcarcely judge of the real ſympathy and compaſſion of the heart from a few kind offices to his fellow-men; nor can I account that perſon merciful, who is not ſo *in ſpirit and in truth.* If, therefore, we try men by their conduct to the brute-creation, how miſerably deficient will they be found in this attribute of ſupreme goodneſs! For what petty intereſts and paſſions are the nobleſt of creatures tortured and abuſed! *

It

* "No ſmall part of mankind derive their chief amuſe-
" ments (ſays a late writer) from the deaths and ſufferings
" of inferior animals; a much greater conſider them only
" as

It appears to have been a part of that curſe, which the diſobedience of the firſt man brought upon his poſterity, that we were compelled to ſtain our hands in blood, and to ſubſiſt on the deſtruction of other animals. But ſurely, if the neceſſities of our nature oblige us to deprive an innocent being of life, it ought to be done in the eaſieſt and

" as engines of wood or iron, uſeful in their ſeveral occu-
" pations. If there are ſome few, who, formed in a ſofter
" mould, view with pity the ſufferings of thoſe defenceleſs
" creatures, there is ſcarce one who entertains the leaſt idea
" that juſtice or gratitude can be due to their merits or ſer-
" vices. The friendly dog is hanged without remorſe, if,
" by barking in defence of his maſter's property, he hap-
" pens unknowingly to diſturb his reſt. The generous
" horſe, who has carried his ungrateful maſter for many
" years with eaſe and ſafety, worn out with age and infir-
" mities contracted in his ſervice, is by him condemned to
" end his miſerable days in a duſt-cart; where, the more he
" exerts his little remains of ſtrength and ſpirit, the more
" he is whipped, to ſave his driver the trouble of whipping
" ſome other leſs obedient to the laſh. Sometimes, having
" been taught the practice of many unnatural and uſeleſs
" feats in a riding-houſe, he is at laſt conſigned to the do-
" minion of a hackney-coachman, by whom he is every
" day inhumanly corrected for performing thoſe tricks,
" which he has learned under ſo long and ſevere a diſci-
" pline."

ſpeedieſt

ſpeedieſt manner: and ſuch was the cuſtom among the peculiar people of GOD. What ſhall we ſay to that luxury, which, for a momentary gratification of appetite, condemns a creature, endued with feeling, and perhaps with mind, to languiſh in torments, and to expire by a protracted and cruel death? * Such luxury I cannot help eſteeming as the *ſop of Judas*, and have little doubt that *a curſe* enters in along with it.

The GOD, whoſe bounty feeds us, and whoſe providence ſuſtains us, the GOD, whoſe attributes we are bound to imitate, inculcates mercy, both by his precepts and example. He extends his favour to the whole creation: *the young lions do ſeek their meat from God*; and *not a ſparrow falleth to*

* This luxury is however frequently merely fanciful; for, the fleſh is commonly rendered more unwholeſome and ill-flavoured by the means uſed to make it whiter and more pleaſing to the eye. The roaſting or boiling of animals alive cannot poſſibly heighten the flavour. Brawn and other ſpecies of food, which are procured by the torture of the animal, are in general extremely unwholeſome.

the

the ground without our heavenly Father. He implicitly commanded his choſen people, *not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn:* and *a merciful man*, ſays an author who wrote by the divine inſpiration, *conſidereth the life of his beaſt.* I confeſs, therefore, that I never am witneſs to any inſtance of wanton barbarity to inferior animals, but I look upon the perſon who exerciſes it as a fallen angel, acting under the immediate direction of Satan, and with all the rancour and malignancy of that evil ſpirit predominant in his breaſt.*

Let us not ſuppoſe that there are no ill conſequences, with reſpect to our ſocial and moral ſentiments, attendant on this mode of conduct. There is no ſetting bounds to the malevolent paſſions; there is no ſaying to them: *hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further.* The man, who cannot feel for a poor, ſubject,

* For a multitude of facts illuſtrative of this ſubject, I will beg leave to refer the reader to a very ingenious author already quoted. — *Diſquiſitions*, attributed to S. JENYNS, Eſq.

dumb,

dumb, innoffenſive animal, will hardly act with juſtice or compaſſion on any occaſion; and I will venture to adviſe, with reſpect to ſuch an one, —" Let no ſuch man be truſt-" ed." Some infatuated parents I have known look upon cruelty to other animals as a mark of ſpirit; but I confeſs I ſhould not wonder (ſuch is the force of habit) if that parent's heart were to ache under the malignancy, which he took ſo little pains to reſtrain, or if children ſo educated were *to bring down his grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave.*

It is obvious, that, as the laſt precept ſeemed to include the former, (for, the merciful man can ſcarcely be guilty of injuſtice,) ſo both of them appear to be indirectly intimated in the words, *walk humbly with thy God*; ſince to walk humbly with GOD is to be obedient to his precepts. In a more limited ſenſe, this part of the text will apply to the performance of ſuch religious duties as he has enjoined, and to the excluſion of all profane or irreverend actions or expreſſions.

expreſſions. On this ſubject we ſhall, if poſſible, find leſs room to compliment the preſent generation than on the two former topics. A ſuperficial and trifling taſte has emancipated us no leſs completely from the influence of humility than from that of religion. So ſmall a ſtock of erudition is indeed required to equip a faſhionable man and a faſhionable writer, that it is nothing extraordinary if our manners and our ſentiments ſhould be found different from thoſe of other times. With our anceſtors the alliance between learning and piety was held ſacred and inviolable; and even at preſent the truth of the principle, which eſtimates the knowledge and genius of any character by his profligacy and irreligion, may, I apprehend, admit of ſome diſpute. The influence of religion upon morals has been frequently inveſtigated, and with little honour to the ſceptical ſide of the queſtion: ſo ſtrict, indeed, does the connexion appear between the three precepts, which are enjoined by the prophet, that I am inclined

to

to doubt, whether any man, who does not *walk humbly with his God*, can either *do juſtly* or *love mercy* as he ought. There is a wide difference between the ſudden impulſe of paſſion and caprice, and that ſteady love of virtue, which a firm belief in the Goſpel muſt always inſpire. Habits of order and decency, at leaſt, are inſeparably connected with the reſtraints and renunciations of a religious life; and here alſo I fear we ſhall loſe by the compariſon, when the ſober manners of our anceſtors are oppoſed to the irregularity, the diſſipation, the profligacy and ſuicide of the preſent times. Nay, I will go further; and I will aſſert, from my acquaintance with individuals, that I have ſeldom known a reſpectable, or even a really proſperous man, who was not exact and regular in the performance of thoſe duties, which he immediately owes to his CREATOR. If, therefore, you would proceed in an honourable and orderly courſe of virtue; if you would be conſiſtent; if you would be reſpectable, attend to the admonition,

nition, — *Walk humbly with thy* GOD. Study to acquire ſuch notions of the Deity and his attributes as are conformable to truth and reaſon. View him as the fountain of *juſtice*, *mercy*, *wiſdom*, of all virtue and all power. Endeavour even to emulate that example of perfection which he has ſet before you; thoſe attributes of infinity, which excite the higheſt admiration the human mind is capable of feeling, are wholly employed and exerted in doing good. The felicity of every being, human and divine, is in exact proportion to their goodneſs. *To do juſtly* and *to love mercy* are the only ſolid foundations of happineſs, even in this life, private as well as ſocial; in fulfilling theſe, as well as every other maxim of divine truth; you are only doing a favour to yourſelf; and yet, O man! this is all that is required of thee, this is the only condition for the attainment of eternal felicity: to *do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy* GOD.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

ON HUMILITY.*

I PET. V. 5.

Be clothed with humility.

THOUGH a holy and religious life be rather an aſſemblage and union of all the moral and evangelical virtues, than a fabric produced from any ſimple material; yet there are ſome qualities or habits of the ſoul, which may be juſtly accounted the baſes or fundamentals, by which the ſtructure is chiefly ſupported; and of this kind is the virtue of humility. It is eſſential to us as men, becauſe an humble demeanour only is conſiſtent with truth and nature, and all pride and arrogance is falſehood and deception. It is eſſential to us as Chriſtians, becauſe without it we ſhall be utterly

* Preached at the Aſylum, June the 12th, 1785.

O incapacitated

incapacitated for the exerciſe of thoſe duties and condeſcenſions, which the ſpirit of our religion requires of us.

Such appears to have been the ſentiment of the apoſtle Peter, if we may judge by the ſtrength and boldneſs of the metaphor which he employs on this occaſion: for, he does not barely ſay, "adorn, or ornament, "yourſelves with the graces of humility;" but, *be clothed* with it, let the whole of your external conduct aſſume the form and the colour of this virtue, let it be the garment in which you are attired, not only for ornament, but uſe. The metaphor is indeed evidently borrowed from the Jewiſh ceremonies, from the ſanctity and virtue which the ſacred veſtments of the prieſts of Iſrael were ſuppoſed to contain, and to impart to the wearer; for, by the Levitical law, the miniſters of the temple were ſtrictly prohibited from performing any part of their duty, unleſs previouſly inveſted with theſe enſigns of their holy office. The apoſtle, therefore, having in the former

mer part of this Epiſtle diſtinguiſhed his Chriſtian converts by the high appellation of a *holy* and a *royal prieſthood*, a *choſen generation*, he now exhorts them, agreeably to the ſame figure, to be *clothed with humility*, as the peculiar veſtment and attire of the Chriſtian prieſthood.

I do not recollect, that this virtue was held in equal eſtimation by the moraliſts or philoſophers of Greece and Rome; nor did any of them, in the detached precepts which they have furniſhed in its commendation, build the arguments in its favour upon proper principles. They have told us, indeed, in general terms, that pride is not proper or expedient for man, but the oracles of divine truth, which direct our attention, beyond ſecond cauſes, to the great ſource and fountain of all, aſſign the proper reaſon for this ſentiment; they exhort us to *give God the glory*, becauſe pride is really not becoming in any created being, and becauſe there is nothing in creation

that can reaſonably adminiſter to this paſſion.

Whatever eminence of parts, whatever ſplendour of ſituation we have attained, however diſtinguiſhed by rank or precedence, we ſhall find no cauſe for ſelf-complacency in theſe acquiſitions, if we but ſeriouſly reflect that we did not make ourſelves; and that we are indebted for them, not to ourſelves, but to another; that they redound not to our own glory, but to that of another. He that called you out of nothing, he endued you with parts and underſtanding, he ſhowered bleſſings into your lap, he cauſed you to be reſpected and to be eſteemed. — His be the praiſe, his the glory! — For, who *maketh thee to differ, or what haſt thou which thou didſt not receive?*

To depreciate external and earthy poſſeſſions is not always the peeviſh effort of miſanthropy, or the language of diſappointment. It is viewing things as they are; for, in reality, though they may redound to the honour of their infinite Creator, they

they are nothing in themſelves. "How "ſubject to change and to corruption are "all ſublunary things!" ſays one of the moſt profound of the ancient moraliſts. — "With what facility do they alter their "nature? They paſs with eaſe into the "ſubſtance of each other, and in an in-"ſtant are reſolved into the mean conſti-"tuents of their being, duſt and aſhes." "Human life itſelf," ſays he in another place, "is but a point; all human enjoy-"ment deluſive and unſatisfactory. Fame "is an abſurdity, often acquired without "merit, and generally conferred without "judgement or conſideration. In ſhort, "life is a warfare, a pilgrimage; and "poſthumous reputation is, with reſpect "to yourſelf, oblivion." How little, and how impotent a being is man! An atom in the great vortex of infinity; a bubble blown up for the moment, and burſt with the ſlighteſt ſhock! View the Nimrods, the Belſhazzars, the Alexanders, and the Cæſars, languiſhing under the preſſure of

ſome tedious diſeaſe. View them ſtung with reſentment, humbled by diſappointment, defiled by intemperance, debaſed by ſuperſtition. Behold the conqueror of the world racked by a pebble, aghaſt with terror at the flight of a bird, or the incoherent prediction of a frantic propheteſs, tranſported with rage and vexation, in an agony of wretchedneſs at the caprices of a harlot: behold him fooliſh, prodigal, cruel, and unjuſt: behold the envy of a gazing multitude the object of contempt and pity with his nearer connexions; and then tell me, if the world, or all that it can beſtow, can elevate ſuch a creature as thou art to any degree of pre-eminence to juſtify thy vanity or thy preſumption?

"If riches confer dignity," ſays the philoſopher, "the mine that yielded them "is more an object of veneration than "thou art." Thou art flattered, thou art careſſed; but, if for thy riches thou art flattered, this is no ground of pride to thee; thy gold is worſhipped, not thyſelf; and,

and, to make the experiment, transfer that to another, and behold all this falſe veneration go along with it.

If of a noble or an ancient family, what is that to thee? It is no merit of thine, it is purely the effect of chance. If, by ſome accident, thy birth had been concealed, thou wouldeſt not have been in any reſpect the better for it; and, bred upon a mountain, the commoneſt peaſant would have been on an equality with thee. If we could deſcend to the uſeleſs and impertinent vanity of tracing pedigrees for but a few ages back, (as is juſtly obſerved by a popular writer,) we ſhould ſcarcely find a beggar, who might not count a king in his family; or a king, who would not appear the lineal offspring of a beggar.*

* Perhaps there is a ſtill ſtronger argument. Were titles and dignities uſually the rewards of virtue and merit, it would be natural for the human mind to recur with ſome degree of pride to the great actions of an anceſtor; but, if we examine accurately, who were the founders of moſt noble families, we ſhall find them ſuch as (if there be any thing at

"The endowments of underſtanding, "however, the embelliſhments of learn- "ing, the graces of eloquence, and the "ſplendour of genius, are certainly our "own; and are diſtinctions which elevate "us towards the rank of ſuperior and ce- "leſtial intelligences, which render us "uſeful to our fellow-creatures, and dear "in the ſight of GOD." Yet remember, that not in the poſſeſſion, but in the uſe of theſe endowments, conſiſts the merit. For, no created being, we are informed, poſſeſſed theſe accompliſhments in higher perfection, than that accurſed ſpirit, who fell from everlaſting bliſs into everlaſting torments; and who is not only eternally miſerable himſelf, but is the baſe inſtrument of inflicting miſery on others.

If genius, eloquence, and erudition, exempted their poſſeſſors from the weak-

at all in birth or anceſtry) ought rather to call a bluſh into the cheeks of their deſcendants. They have been either the minions of courts, the peculators of nations, or the ſervile miniſters of their monarch's vices.

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neſſes and errors of men, they might indeed afford ſome little plea for ſelf-exaltation. But melancholy is the view with which an intimate knowledge of human nature preſents us. The greateſt minds have been occaſionally ſubject to weakneſſes of underſtanding, violence of paſſion, and perverſities of temper, which, in the cool moments of reflexion, muſt humble and debaſe them, even in their own opinions: and, as genius and learning ſerve to point and quicken all the human feelings, their remorſe, their ſhame, the ſenſe of their debaſement, muſt be more ſevere than that of ordinary minds.

But, *the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs with God.* It has been the complaint of the moſt enlightened minds, that the ſole effect of their philoſophy was the ſenſe of their own ignorance. So imperfect are the faculties of man, that, the farther we advance in ſcience, the more we diſcern their weakneſs and incapacity of comprehending the infinite objects which a ſurvey of this univerſe preſents; not to ſpeak of thoſe higher ſpeculations

culations which regard the intellectual world. In morals, to know ourſelves is to know our own imbecillity, perverſeneſs, the general depravity and unworthineſs of our natures. Wit is little more than ſpecious trifling. Eloquence, a mere ſcience of words and ſounds, calculated to faſcinate the ear; or it is, at moſt, a play upon the paſſions and infirmities of others; and, inſtead of exciting lofty ideas of human nature, affords matter only for an humble opinion of ourſelves and our fellow-creatures. As for the inferior arts, they are expedients to ſupply our natural defects and inconveniences, or they are calculated to fill up the interſtices of time, to render the burthen of life more tolerable. They are, therefore, to the rational mind, incitements to humility, which in every view appears conformable to truth, to reaſon, and to the nature of man.

I obſerved, that humility is eſſential to the practice of all the Chriſtian duties and virtues,

virtues, and to the fulfilling faithfully the precepts of our Redeemer.

The firſt virtue of our religion is to *love the Lord our God.* — But how love him? It is to love him alone; to *love him with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength.* Now, the affections of the proud man have a different object: for, whatever excuſes may be made for pride, its root is ſelfiſhneſs; and the ſelfiſh man cannot be acceptable to GOD, nor can he fulfil his commandments as he ought, or upon proper motives. Beſides this, GOD is the GOD of truth, nay, is truth itſelf. — Pride we have already proved to be altogether falſehood and deception, and therefore inconſiſtent with the love of truth and of GOD.

But, the manner, in which we are to *love* GOD, is to love him in his creatures, that is, *thy neighbour as thyſelf:* this is indeed the only teſtimony we are able to afford of our love to GOD, and our reſpect for his commandments; and this is altogether inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with a proud and overbearing ſpirit. *Only by pride cometh contention.* Pride renders us ſore and captious upon every trifling occaſion. It generates diſputes, where there would otherwiſe have been none. It makes us envious, ſuſpicious, turbulent, and tyrannical. The virtues of meekneſs and humility are commonly connected in the language of the Scriptures, and in the nature of things it is impoſſible that without the latter the former can exiſt.

The great Chriſtian duty of charity requires innumerable acts of kindneſs and condeſcenſion, which it is impoſſible for a haughty and ungoverned ſpirit to perform. The LORD JESUS, whoſe whole life was one continued act of humility, and the manner of whoſe appearance ſeems chiefly intended to recommend this virtue, was not above waſhing the feet of his diſciples; nor did he except to performing the office even to the traitor Judas, who, he knew, was about to betray him.

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As Chriſtians, we are obliged not only to *forgive*, but to *love our enemies*; and I am ſure no inconſiderable ſhare of humility is requiſite to this duty. Revenge is generally the effect of wounded pride, which if we could but learn to ſubdue, we ſhould find tranquillity and forgiveneſs perfectly conſiſtent with true dignity of ſoul.

Beſides this, we are to receive with patience, and even with joy the viſitations of the ALMIGHTY. We are to *glory in tribulation.*— St. Paul gloried in his *ſtripes.* Are you poor? The Son of GOD was born in a manger, and during the whole courſe of his earthly pilgrimage *had not where to lay his head.* Are you evil-ſpoken of? He was called a *glutton and a wine-bibber*, a *Samaritan*, and one *poſſeſſed of a devil.* Are you treated contumelioufly? He was *buffeted*, *ſpit upon*, *ſcourged*, and *crucified* as a common malefactor.

It is a queſtion whether even the cardinal virtue, juſtice, can ſubſiſt without a degree of humility; ſince I know nothing that tempts

tempts us more frequently to violate the rights of mankind, than that evil diſpoſition, which induces us to ſet ourſelves above our fellow-mortals. An humble and obliging demeanour contributes more to the real happineſs of thoſe with whom we aſſociate than any lucrative favours we could heap upon them; and, if we judge according to the divine injunction of *doing unto others as we would they ſhould do unto us*, we ſhall be full as cautious of wounding the peace and happineſs of thoſe whom Providence has placed in an inferior ſtation, by the wanton diſplay of our ſuperiority, as we ſhould be of injuring their property. So valuable, indeed, does the wiſe man account the bleſſing of tranquillity, that he exclaims: *Better is a dry morſel and quietneſs therewith, than a houſe full of ſacrifices with ſtrife.*

Pride alſo, as far as reſpects ourſelves, is generally accompanied with a train of evils. Inſtead of cauſing us to be loved and revered by others, which ſhould ſeem

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to be the natural intention of it, its certain effect is to make us hated, if not deſpiſed. It often induces habits of extravagance and prodigality, which end in beggary and ruin. It is, in fine, the vice only of inferior minds, who, wanting real dignity, graſp eagerly at every means of acquiring the ſhadow or appearance of conſequence, and who, poſſeſſed of no qualities to render them eſtimable in the ſight of others, endeavour to make up for the deficiency by ſeeming great in their own eyes; and, that they may not exiſt intirely deſtitute of admirers, like the infatuated youth in the fable, fall in love with themſelves.

As far as humility may be affected by the operation of the divine grace and providence upon our ſouls, it is to be ſought for by diligent, or rather conſtant prayer; as far as it is a human habit or virtue, it will admit of cultivation and improvement by human efforts. I ſhall therefore conclude with a few obſervations, which will probably aſſiſt you in the cultivation of this virtue,

tue, and which, I am of opinion, you will find as conducive to your happineſs here, as they certainly will be to the attainment of that which we hope for hereafter.

I. Endeavour to lay the foundation of humility upon proper principles. Remember, that there is nothing in nature, and eſpecially in human nature, that can juſtify the contrary diſpoſition. Conſider your tranſient, momentary, and uncertain exiſtence; the miſery and infirmity of your nature, bodily and mental; and what a little and inſignificant being you are in the ſcale of infinity.

II. Look not altogether on the outward and apparent ſplendour of things, and do not accuſtom yourſelf to ſuppoſe happineſs and dignity neceſſarily connected with pomp, equipage, and the gaze of the vulgar.

III. Meditate often on your failings and defects; make frequent confeſſion of your ſins; and I will anſwer for it, that, if you are faithful in taking an account of them, you will find no great reaſon to be in love with

with yourſelf. " Remember," ſays the excellent Biſhop Taylor, " that we uſually " diſparage others upon ſlight grounds and " light inſtances; and, if we can throw " one ſin, folly, or infirmity, into the ac- " count of another man, we think him " ſufficiently leſſened." Let us therefore be juſt to ourſelves, ſince we are ſevere to others; and reflect that, whatever good any one can think or ſay of us, we can tell him of a hundred baſe, unworthy and fooliſh actions, any one of which would ſeem ſufficient to deſtroy the reputation of another.

IV. Let us eſtimate our own advantages with the ſame ſtrictneſs, with which we eſtimate thoſe of others. " When your " neighbour is extolled by public fame," ſays the philoſopher whom I quoted in the former part of this diſcourſe, " you are apt " to aſſert, that the multitude is ignorant, " injudicious, and inſane: why, then, " ſhould you think them learned and judi- " cious if they applaud you? or why

" ſhould you aſpire to be the object of their " adulation ?"

V. Avoid carefully the ſociety of flatterers, nor be deſirous of praiſe, even when you are conſcious of deſerving it; the mind is apt enough to amuſe itſelf with offerings to its own vanity, nor does it ſtand in need of foreign aid in the great buſineſs of ſelf-deception.

VI. and laſtly. Accuſtom yourſelf, every evening of your life, to *ſelf-examination*; and aſk yourſelf ingenuouſly, and in the ſight of GOD, " Am I modeſt, meek, un- " ambitious, free, open, and of an obli- " ging demeanour? Can I bear with pa- " tience to hear of my faults; and can I " love even thoſe who wrongfully accuſe " me? Am I free from affectation? can I " contentedly paſs undiſtinguiſhed among " my equals? and am I never tempted to " adopt any peculiarities in ſentiment or " manner, by way of appearing eminent " or ſingular? Do I find in my own breaſt " no ſigns of murmuring or repining? Do

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" I not feel degraded by the duties of my " ſecular employment, or by thoſe which " CHRIST has enjoined us to perform for " each other? Do I not, at ſome times, " really eſtimate myſelf above others? am " I not inclined to fancy my inferiors in " ſtation my inferiors in the ſight of GOD? " Do I never treat them roughly, ſeverely, " tyrannically; nor wantonly draw a tear " into the eye, that looks up to me for " ſupport?" —— If you can anſwer theſe queſtions to your own ſatisfaction; if ſuch be the temper and habit of your ſoul; you are poſſeſſed of the beſt, if not the only ſecret of happineſs; and I am ſure I can wiſh you no greater bleſſing than a continuance of this grace and heavenly diſpoſition.

SERMON VIII.

ON TEMPERANCE.*

I COR. XV. 32.

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

WHILE the ſeverer moraliſts of antiquity were engaged in laborious reſearches into the nature of man, the ends of his creation, his relation to the ſovereign Author of his being; and from theſe attempted to deduce the proper conſtituent principles of human felicity; the gay votaries of Epicurus reduced the whole of moral ſcience to a few ſhort and pointed aphoriſms, calculated, it may well be ſuppoſed, rather to ſuperſede the labour of ſtudy, than to induce to it; to captivate the fancy, to enliven converſation,

* Preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, March 25, 1787.

and, by a brilliancy of wit and a ſhrewdneſs of expreſſion, to ſilence rather than convince their opponents.

One of their leading maxims is that alluded to in the words of my text. It affords, indeed, one of the moſt plauſible arguments in favour of a life of ſenſual pleaſure. Nor has its influence been confined to the profeſſed diſciples or to the age of Epicurus; but, at this day, we meet with a maxim of ſimilar import among thoſe whom the complaiſance of the age has dignified with the appellation of men of pleaſure, or men of the world: "A ſhort life and a "merry one" is the modern tranſlation of the ancient Epicurean proverb.

As a contrary doctrine, however, has been aſſerted by ſome characters of the higheſt reputation for knowledge and ſagacity; and particularly by thoſe, who have profeſſed the Goſpel-ſyſtem of morality; it will perhaps not be thought unſeaſonable to beſtow ſome little attention on an inveſtigation of the truth and reaſonableneſs of

theſe different opinions. In the courſe of our examination it will be proper to inquire, firſt, whether to *eat and to drink* be the ſole purpoſe of human life; and conſequently, whether to reſign ourſelves to the pleaſures of appetite be really conducive to our preſent happineſs: and ſecondly, whether the maxim be well grounded on the popular argument, *To-morrow we die.*

The limited portion of happineſs, which we are capable of attaining in this life, not leſs than the ſhortneſs of life itſelf, ſeems to afford a preſumption, that we are to make the moſt of thoſe enjoyments, that are within our reach. The proſpects of a future ſtate of happineſs, in a new-created world, appear too diſtant to captivate or allure the man of ſtrong and impatient appetites, and of ſanguine affections; the uncertainty, too, as to the nature of thoſe enjoyments, the darkneſs and perplexity in which they are involved, afford a further and ſtill ſtronger inducement to ſeize thoſe gratifications which are preſent and certain.

It may be ſaid, " that the Deity, in crea-
" ting a world of pleaſurable and inviting
" objects, certainly did not create them for
" nothing; did not intend to debar us
" from the uſe and enjoyment of them.
" Has he given us appetites which ought not
" to be ſatisfied? or can it be ſuppoſed un-
" grateful to him that we act conformably
" to thoſe principles, which he has implant-
" ed in our natures? *To eat and to drink*
" cannot be contrary to his divine will, ſince
" he has made the gratification of thoſe
" appetites not only pleaſant, but neceſſary;
" and, if they really promote our happi-
" neſs here, let us embrace the opportuni-
" ty, *for to-morrow we die.*"

That GOD has indeed given us appetites to be ſatisfied, and a number of excellent creatures to ſatisfy them in their utmoſt extent, is true. That to eat and to drink may be productive of a certain degree of pleaſure, we will not deny. But, that theſe are the chief of human delights, or the ends for which man is created, is a principle

principle deſtructive in its conſequences, and capable of refutation even by the evidence of experience. If theſe be the chief of pleaſures, the brute-creation, nay, the vileſt and moſt contemptible of them, are ſuperior to man, and poſſeſs a much more exalted degree of felicity. But, after all that we can do, it is impoſſible to confine our views altogether to the preſent. It is the nature of man to look forward to the future, and the expectation of that future will unavoidably mix itſelf with the enjoyment of the preſent. If this be the caſe, much of the Epicurean argument will appear to be erected with little or with no foundation. The pleaſures of appetite are momentary; and, if not actually attended with diſguſt, are ſeldom capable of ſupplying, upon reflexion, any true ſatisfaction or delight.

We may, on this occaſion, retort the argument upon our adverſaries; we may reply, if to eat and to drink be the ſole or even the principal end of human exiſtence, why

why are theſe other much more complex and extenſive faculties and paſſions laviſhed upon us? Why have we minds elevated to the contemplation of the nobleſt and moſt exalted objects? Memories capable of collecting and preſerving a ſeries of intellectual truths? Imaginations, that will wander into worlds unknown? Hopes, that purſue pleaſures beyond the boundaries of human exiſtence? Much more limited faculties would have ſufficed for a life of mere animal and ſenſual gratification. Nay, what is ſtill more extraordinary, theſe other faculties and paſſions ſerve commonly to interrupt and to diminiſh the ſenſual enjoyments.

GOD, by the voice of nature, has indeed commanded us, *to eat and to drink*; but, neither GOD, Nature, nor Reaſon has warranted exceſs in the gratification of theſe appetites. Aſk the ſlave of ſenſuality, *what fruit had you in theſe things?*—Aſk him, in the tedious hours, that ſucceed a ſatiety of pleaſure, (and how numerous are theſe, when

when compared with the hours of what he calls enjoyment!) — Aſk him, when deprived of health; when, lingering out an uneaſy exiſtence in a ſtate of liſtleſs ſolitude, he is deſtitute of preſent bliſs, has no conſolation in reverting to the paſt, and dares not lift up his eyes to look forward to the future: — Aſk him, when ruined and undone; his fortune diſſipated; his reputation gone; his ſociety avoided; perhaps not only in want of the luxuries, but even of the common neceſſaries of life: — Aſk him, if to *eat, drink, and be merry*, be the certain means of procuring even temporal felicity? It cannot ſurely be reaſonable or prudent, for the pleaſure of a moment, to expoſe ourſelves to years of pain and infirmity; to ſquander away our health and reputation, and all the conſtituents of happineſs for the remainder of our lives.

That Nature and Reaſon point out exceſs and intemperance at leaſt not to be the end of man's creation, will ſufficiently appear, if we but conſider, that there is no man

man but is aſhamed of theſe vices when detected in them; that they blunt and deſtroy the faculties of the mind; that they extinguiſh the natural independence and dignity of man, and reduce him to the meaneſt expedients for the gratification of his appetite; that they expoſe us to the commiſſion of almoſt every other vice, ſometimes involuntarily, when the reaſon is clouded and confuſed by exceſs, and generally by the force of habitual depravity. Very different, in their nature and effects, are the pleaſures of intellect, the acquirement of knowledge, the ſervice of our Creator, the performance of the moral duties. Theſe can never be attended with repentance, ſhame, or mental uneaſineſs. They are conſtant, and not liable to interruption; and thoſe, who have made the experiment upon both, will inform you, that they are infinitely more diverſified, more laſting, and more exquiſite, than all that ſenſe can preſent to our acceptance.

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The fact is, if it were poſſible to admit the ſenſual pleaſures to be the chief buſineſs, and to conſtitute the chief happineſs of life, the end would be counteracted by the unlawful and exceſſive indulgence of them. The writings of antiquity, and even of the Epicureans themſelves, are full of aphoriſms in commendation of the bleſſings of moderation; proving, that occaſionally to forbear is to heighten enjoyment; that ſatiety is uniformly attended with diſguſt; that a ſound body and a good appetite are the hand-maids of pleaſure, which it is impoſſible for him to retain, who leads a life of continual diſſipation.

Such would be the ſtate of the caſe, if natural religion only were known upon earth, and if the will of GOD had never been revealed to man. But, ſince the ALMIGHTY has thought proper to ſubmit us to this ſtate of probation; ſince he has made theſe the abſolute terms of our acceptance with him, namely, that we mortify or ſubdue every *inordinate affection*; that we *keep under*

under the body, and bring it into ſubjection; that *we make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof*; ſince this is the caſe, there is, there can be, no plea for the ſtupidity of thoſe, who adopt the maxim of an ancient atheiſtical ſect. For, thus the matter ſtands with us: either the Scriptures are a forgery, and their authors impoſtors; or *thou, who liveſt in pleaſure, art dead while thou liveſt*; thou, who beareſt the name of CHRIST in vain, *art altogether in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity!* In thy purſuit of enjoyment, thou ſhalt find nothing but ſatiety, diſguſt and repentance. A debilitated conſtitution, an aching head, a reproachful conſcience, a ruined fortune, a loſt reputation, will be thy portion in this world; without the ſmalleſt hope of conſolation, with rather indeed the certain expectation of miſery, in another.

The ſtupidity of the maxim can only be equalled by that of the argument, which is alleged in its ſupport: *for, to-morrow we die.* It is right, indeed, that the intemperate

perate perſon ſhould be prepared for death, for he frequently meets it prematurely. Many, in the height of a debauch, are cut off by ſudden diſeaſe; not to ſpeak of the brawls and quarrels, the numerous accidents to which ſuch a courſe of life is inevitably expoſed. But, has he, who diſcourſes thus familiarly about death, conſidered what it is *to die?* Has he conſidered, that it is to be rudely torn in a moment, in the *twinkling of an eye*, from all he loved, valued, or deſired? That it is the painful burſting of theſe vital cords? That, on the ſuppoſition moſt favourable to him, it is to ſink into nothing? to loſe ſenſation, motion, thought and remembrance? "to "become a kneaded clod?" But, has he conſidered it in another, far more awful view? Has he conſidered the great probability, let me ſay the certainty, of an after-ſtate? Has he conſidered, then, that to die is to be hurried off, in the very maturity of his ſin, to the preſence, and before the throne of that GREAT BEING, whoſe majeſty he

he has affronted, whoſe commandments he has trampled on? Has he conſidered what enſues? that it is puniſhment eternal, not to be deſcribed, not indeed to be conceived? If the maxim, which has been the ſubject of our animadverſion, be folly and contradiction even in the mouth of an impious Epicurean; ſurely to him, who has the remoteſt belief in the Goſpel of CHRIST, or in any part of the Holy Scriptures; who has even a ſuſpicion that they may chance to be true, the idea of *to-morrow we die*, "a ſhort life and a merry one," muſt be fraught with abſurdity, with impiety, with every thing dangerous and deteſtable in the extreme.

Go to the dying-bed of ſome unregenerate ſinner; of ſome *fool*, who *hath ſaid, in his heart, there is no* GOD; of ſome thoughtleſs Epicurean, who has ſteered his courſe by the deſtructive maxim, which is expoſed in the text, whoſe exiſtence has been ſhort, and what he perhaps called merry. Obſerve then the agonizing ſorrows that await

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on guilt in the laſt ſtage of its exiſtence; obſerve the racking pains of a diſeaſed body, heightened by the more excruciating tortures of the mind; obſerve the awakened conſcience willing to diſbelieve a future ſtate, but finding it impoſſible. Obſerve this, and, if you can, return to the houſe of feaſting and of jollity. — If you can, ſquander your time and your ſalvation in *chambering and wantonneſs*, in *drunkenneſs and riot*; if you can, *eat, drink, and be merry*, and conſole yourſelf with the exhilarating reflexion, *To-morrow we die.*

SERMON IX.

ON THE LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE TONGUE.*

MATTHEW XXVI. 74.

Then began he to curſe and to ſwear.

WHEN Ignorance or Profligacy would calumniate religion, or apologize for depravity, it is no uncommon device to arraign the errors of thoſe characters, whom the Scripture-hiſtory has repreſented as highly illuſtrious, and in ſome degree ſacred; thoſe who, for ſome particular actions or virtues, are depicted as favourites in the ſight of heaven.

Thus, by the malignancy of human folly, that unexampled ſimplicity, that ſtrict adherence to the genuine form of truth, which might be inſiſted upon as one of the moſt powerful arguments in favour of the

* Preached at St. Anne's, Weſtminſter, Sept. 25, 1785.

ſacred writers, is perverted to the worſt of purpoſes. Had they (after the manner of other hiſtorians*) repreſented their heroes with all the pomp of imaginary virtue; had they exhibited only the extremes of moral excellence and moral depravity, ſuch as common obſervation aſſures us exiſt only in the regions of fancy; with what triumph would the circumſtance be converted to an impeachment of their veracity? It is to their credit that no ſuch highly-coloured portraits are to be found in their writings: the plain and unadorned facts are ſimply recorded; no deviation from the order of the narrative, either for the purpoſe of cenſure or panegyric, is admitted; the author cautiouſly avoids intruding himſelf upon the eye of the reader;

* I ſcarcely know any hiſtory, which does not contain ſome of theſe *faultleſs monſters*. Tacitus, who is deſervedly celebrated for his penetration, and admirable art in the developing of the human character, is not deſtitute of them. His Germanicus, his Pœtus, and ſome other inſtances, are certainly out of nature; though not quite ſo romantic and inconſiſtent as the Julian of a modern hiſtorian.

nor

nor is the ſimple majeſty of truth ſacrificed to the tinſel of epithet, or the quaintneſs of antitheſis.

To expect, however, from human nature, a degree of perfection, which can be the lot of no created being; to make no account of the influence of moral cauſes on the mind of man, betrays a deficiency, not only in thoſe vulgar accompliſhments, religion and common-ſenſe, but in what, with ſome, I will not ſay with moſt, are in much higher eſtimation, knowledge, philoſophy, and diſcernment. Can it be philoſophical to annihilate every diſtinction of times and circumſtances? to allow nothing to the general want of civilization, to the ferocity, the ſenſuality, the ignorance incidental to the early periods of ſociety? To the Jews *many things were permitted for the hardneſs of their hearts*; and he is but a poor moraliſt, who is not ſenſible, that a degree of ſcience and civilization, much higher than exiſted under the Jewiſh republic, is eſſentially neceſſary to fit mankind for the

reception of a refined ſyſtem of ethics. I cannot help ſuſpecting, therefore, after all that has been ſaid, that the Apoſtle Paul will be found a more candid reaſoner, and a more enlightened philoſopher, than thoſe with whom we are at preſent contending: *the times of this ignorance*, ſays he, GOD *winked at*; and waited for *the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time*, which made men *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.**

To ſuppoſe, again, that particular examples of imperfection afford room either to queſtion the reality of virtue, or to deny our obligation to it; that the weakneſs of one man will juſtify the ſin of another, can be the error only of a very untutored mind. Muſt a character, to deſerve the appellation of religious, not only poſſeſs the virtues of a man, but of a god? Muſt we expect to find in it no taint, no ſeaſoning of human paſſion and weakneſs, in the moſt arduous

* Acts xvii. 30. Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 13.

circumſtances,

circumſtances, in the hard ſtruggles of adverſity, and the ſtill ſeverer trials of unlimited proſperity; amidſt the vanities of courts, the ſociety of flatterers, and the imbecillity of age? *

Far, therefore, from eſteeming the tranſaction recorded in the words of my text a juſtification of profane or indecent language; let me flatter myſelf, that it will afford to this aſſembly an uſeful leſſon againſt the LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE TONGUE; that it will teach them to ſet a guard upon their lips, as well as upon their conduct; to *refrain their tongue from evil, and their lips from ſpeaking guile.*

It is, I preſume, almoſt unneceſſary to remind you, that the offending perſon, ſpoken of in the text, is Peter: — not only an apoſtle, but one of the chief of the apoſ-

* See the Biſhop of Cheſter's admirable and truly-philoſophical Vindication of the Character of David. It was printed as a ſingle Sermon, and ſurely it is to be regretted that it is not inſerted in his excellent Collection of Sermons, lately publiſhed.

tles: — one on every occaſion diſtinguiſhed by his faith, as well as by his zeal in maintaining it; the moſt ardent friend, the moſt forward diſciple of his bleſſed Maſter. But, my brethren, the nature of the ſin cannot be altered by the dignity of the perſon in whom it predominates; and the only rational enquiry is, not who has been found guilty of this particular crime, but what is the crime itſelf, and what are its conſequences. So little advantage, however, will the common ſwearer derive from this example of Peter, that there are circumſtances, which render the caſe altogether inapplicable to his own, and prove it the moſt impotent of all poſſible excuſes for the licentiouſneſs of the tongue.

In the firſt place, though the Jewiſh law had forbidden the ſacred name of GOD to be vainly or irreverendly uſed, it does not appear (at leaſt according to the mode of interpretation purſued in the Rabbinical ſchools) to have been equally ſevere againſt other oaths, and other ſpecies of profaneneſs.

neſs. Chriſtianity, as it holds forth greater advantages to its votaries, ſo it requires from them a much greater degree of purity and exactneſs in the performance of every duty. It enjoins us: *Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool; but let your communication be yea and nay.* Now, the doctrines of CHRIST, though they were indeed partially explained and publiſhed by our Lord himſelf, were not collected and formed into a ſyſtem at the time of this defection of Peter. Peter might poſſibly not have been preſent at that part of our Lord's ſermon, which regarded this particular branch of diſcipline; or, if preſent, it is poſſible enough that, among ſuch a multitude of precepts, one of them might be overlooked; or, at leaſt, the impreſſion might be tranſitory, and not ſuch as to force itſelf, on all occaſions, upon his recollection. It does not appear, that Peter dealt irreverendly with the ſacred name of his Creator on this occaſion: he only *began*

to

to curſe and to ſwear. Peter was ſtill a Jew, and, as a Jew, his offence was leſs than that of a Chriſtian, who ſwears at all; and much leſs than that of one who preſumes *to take the name of the Lord his God in vain.*

Secondly. It is on all parts agreed, that Peter, at the time of the denial of CHRIST, was very far from being in ſuch a ſtate of moral and Chriſtian perfection, as is termed, in the language of Scripture, a ſtate of regeneration, or renewal of heart and life. His zeal, it is true, was great; but, he had been but very lately converted, and evil habits are not to be ſurmounted at once. The time of his probation was very ſhort, when he was called upon to this ſevere trial; and there is reaſon to believe he had been before a notorious ſinner, for, the firſt inſtance of his converſion was a confeſſion of his conſcience: *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord!* — Not to mention, that he had not yet received the Holy Ghoſt. Very different was the conduct of Peter, when confirmed in the faith. Before the chief

chief prieſts and elders ſummoned to appear at the peril of his life, he did not then *begin to curſe and to ſwear*; but *preached Jeſus boldly*, and teſtified, *ſaying, we ought to obey God rather than men*; and, when perſecuted and beaten, he departed, *rejoicing that he had been counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt.*

In the third place. It muſt be indeed confeſſed, that Peter, on this occaſion, ſwore falſely. But, let us conſider, that his life was in immediate danger: *Skin for ſkin*, ſays Satan in Job; *all that a man hath will he give for his life.* The ſpirits of Peter were at that moment depreſſed by every circumſtance that could conſpire to deprive him of his fortitude, and diſturb and perplex the human feelings. He ſaw the man in whom he truſted delivered up, and unable to aſſiſt him. He ſaw his friends and companions deſerted, and he himſelf alone in the hands of an enraged multitude, diſpoſed, with all the rage and violence of popular fury, to put him to an inſtant and cruel

cruel death: and, ſhall the common ſwearer, who ſwears falſely on the moſt trivial occaſion; who ſwears indeed without conſidering whether what he ſwears be true or falſe; who ſwears wantonly, and without the ſmalleſt motive or neceſſity, think to juſtify himſelf by ſuch an example?

Fourthly. Though *Peter began to curſe and to ſwear*, none has ever preſumed to aſſert, that this was no crime in him. On the contrary, it remains, to this very hour, a ſtain upon his character, which all his meritorious actions, his unremitted zeal, his ſufferings, his martyrdom, are ſcarcely ſufficient to expunge. You, who have ſworn, not for the ſake of life, but out of pure wantonneſs, out of an habitual contempt for your SAVIOUR and your GOD: — Has your repentance ever equalled that of Peter? Did you ever *go out*, when you had committed ſuch a crime, *and weep bitterly?* Say not, in extenuation, that Peter added to this guilt, that of the denial of his Lord. — Your whole life has been a conſtant

conſtant denial, a contempt of him and his commandments, which when you perverſely tranſgreſs, and particularly when you tranſgreſs by treating his ever-ſacred name in an irreverend and indecent manner, you moſt effectually deny him.

It is a very trite obſervation, that, of all vices, profaneneſs is that, which is leaſt productive of either profit or of pleaſure; indeed I believe it will be a very difficult matter to ſpecify any one advantage reſulting from it, or any one rational motive for the practice of it. It cannot be neceſſary to confirm every common aſſertion in converſation with an oath: it is the worſt compliment we can poſſibly pay to ourſelves, to afford any room for ſuſpicion that our word would not be taken on every trifling occaſion. It is a demeaning of ourſelves; it is an affront upon our company; and, there is this further abſurdity attending it, that he, who cannot be believed on his word, is ſeldom credited on his oath.

But,

But, the truth is, this is very ſeldom, if ever, the motive to common ſwearing. It is in general intended to give an air of boldneſs and courage;* or elſe to fill up the vacancies of converſation, where there is a barrenneſs of underſtanding, and to ſubſtitute words in the place of ideas. As to the firſt, give me leave to obſerve, *that* is no true courage, which is founded in folly; and that affectation of courage, which bids defiance to the MAJESTY of HEAVEN, to decency, good order, and good manners, muſt be folly in the extreme. It is no uncommon artifice of cowardice to make a ſhow of bravery where the danger ſeems remote; I muſt however remark, that the device but ſeldom ſucceeds, even with the very vulgar: when ſo much pains are ta-

* It is therefore commonly affected by very young, and very ignorant perſons, juſt emerging from a ſtate of boyhood, and is one of thoſe artifices which they practiſe to appear manly before their time; it however never fails to have a contrary effect, and to make their youth and their folly more apparent.

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ken to acquire the appearance of any thing, a ſuſpicion always ariſes, that the reality is wanting; and the end is actually counteracted by the imprudent means, which are employed to effect it.

The other plea is, I confeſs, ſomewhat more ſpecious; I am ready to admit, that a ſcarcity of ideas is, on ſome occaſions, an inconvenience; and, very poſſibly, the limited faculties of ſome perſons may abſolutely require the aſſiſtance of certain common-place phraſes, and even of oaths, to give them the appearance of ſpeaking animals. As the reputation, however, of a barren underſtanding is not very agreeable, and as the device is now detected and expoſed, I would not adviſe any perſon, who perceives in himſelf a want of ideas, to put in practice ſo hackneyed a ſtratagem; I would rather adviſe him to avoid profaneneſs as he would avoid the reputation of ignorance, emptineſs, and weakneſs of underſtanding.

Indeed;

Indeed; as knowledge becomes more diffuſed, and as converſation improves, I truſt I am not miſtaken in the hope that profaneneſs is at preſent going gradually out of faſhion. I know that it is of the utmoſt importance to every perſon, who wiſhes to write or to ſpeak with elegance or correctneſs, to obſerve a delicacy and politeneſs of language in his common converſation. The ſtyle, which is eked out with oaths or common-place expreſſions of any kind, will naturally be lame and incorrect on occaſions, when theſe cannot be introduced; whoever, therefore, would appear either the gentleman or the ſcholar, ought, on every account, to avoid them.

There are a few perſons, I fear, with whom religious motives will have little weight upon this occaſion. Theſe perſons, however, I would admoniſh, that it is paying too high a compliment to that religion, which they affect to deſpiſe, to make uſe of language, which is utterly deſtitute of force or meaning, if the ſyſtem to which it

it relates be quite deſtitute of foundation. They, therefore, at the very beſt, ſubject themſelves to the imputation of talking nonſenſe; with the addition of another diſagreeable circumſtance, namely, that they may poſſibly be ſuſpected of having ſome little notion or apprehenſion of that religion, the peculiar language of which they condeſcend to employ.

To thoſe, who have any degree of faith in the truth of revelation, the abſurdity of this vice muſt be inſtantly apparent. It muſt be inſtantly apparent, that the vices of the tongue are intimately connected with the vices of the heart; that an abandonment of principle, a levity of manners will conſtantly accompany a levity and licentiouſneſs of converſation. Our minds are the creatures of habit; our actions are the conſequents of our ideas. Profaneneſs, therefore, naturally leſſens thoſe reſpects, which ought ever to be eſteemed ſacred. The tongue cannot uſe the name of GOD in a free and unlicenſed manner, with-

out taking from that reverence, which the welfare of ſociety and of our own ſouls requires we ſhould ever retain for him. The ſolemn oaths, which Juſtice employs for the general ſafety and tranquillity, become a mockery and a jeſt in the eye of him who ſwears commonly, wantonly and falſely. In a word, ſince the ALMIGHTY has thought proper to prohibit it in ſo ſolemn a manner; to practiſe a vice, which neither can contribute to our temporal intereſt or our temporal pleaſure, is certainly but few degrees ſhort of actual inſanity.

All vices are more eaſily prevented than reformed; and, as this is not a vice of paſſion, but of habit only, and is frequently, I might ſay generally acquired by imitation only; one moſt obvious mode of preventing it, is to avoid the company and converſation of thoſe, whoſe contagious manners may affect the rectitude of our hearts, and eſpecially of thoſe minor wits, who would purchaſe at an eaſy rate a few tranſient applauſes from dulneſs and ignorance, by retailing

tailing the trite objections of infidel and profligate writers. In this too, too liberal age, ſuch a caution will be thought, or rather will be ſaid, to ſavour of bigotry. But, let us not, I intreat you, in our zeal for toleration, forget that there is a very ample difference between perſecution and encouragement; between actually laying violent hands upon a man for the ſake of his opinions, and giving countenance and ſupport to thoſe opinions by taking that man to our boſom. The utmoſt ſtretch of charity ſurely cannot require an intire ſacrifice of common ſenſe and private happineſs. It is impoſſible to eſteem that man my friend, who would deprive me of every deareſt hope, of every beſt of comforts, would leave me without a ſingle motive to virtue, a ſingle principle of belief. Let ſuch a man enjoy with freedom his own gloomy and diſcontented diſpoſition; but let me enjoy at leaſt the ſame equal liberty, and give me leave only to make choice of my company. May the GOD of truth and righteouſneſs

ever defend us from that liberality, which ſhall induce us to become tame and patient ſpectators of blaſphemy and impiety, *to ſtand in the way of ſinners, or ſit in the ſeat of the ſcornful.*

This caution applies principally, indeed, to the inexperienced and the young. To thoſe ſinners, who may have deviated from the paths of truth and piety, and yet wiſh to return, it may be ſatisfactory to add, that, of all vices, this of profaneneſs is perhaps the moſt eaſy to be reformed. Even where the habit is already fixed, a few exertions will reclaim it. It is but putting a ſlight reſtraint upon yourſelf at firſt; and this reſtraint will be attended with a further advantage, namely, that it will reduce you, by degrees, to the habits and order of a religious life; teach you to ſubdue other evil propenſities, make you acquainted with diſcipline, and render it eaſy and commodious to you.

To inſiſt on the danger of continuing in the habit muſt be totally unneceſſary after what

what has been ſaid, and ſince the conſequences of unrepented ſins are ſo notorious, and ſo generally underſtood. There is, however, one doctrine of our religion, which will perhaps be more effectual than any other in promoting your reformation. I therefore conclude with earneſtly recommending it to your moſt ſerious attention. As Moſes gave the law to the children of Iſrael, I give it you *for a token upon thine hand*, and *for frontlets between thine eyes*; for a maxim to be engraven on your hearts, and of which you are never to loſe ſight. *By our words we ſhall be juſtified, and by our words we ſhall be condemned; and, at the laſt great day, every* IDLE WORD *muſt be accounted for.*

SERMON X.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PASSIONS.*

GAL. V. 17.

The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other.

IN an age, when much declamation has been expended in favour of a philoſophy independent of the Scriptures, it may poſſibly be thought viſionary and enthuſiaſtic to refer the curious inquirer into the mechaniſm of the human mind to the Goſpel of CHRIST. That in this ſyſtem the ſprings of action are not always minutely inveſtigated, nor the ſeveral principles detailed with the pompous diſplay of philoſophic preciſion, I am ready to grant. The aim

* Preached at St. Anne's, Weſtminſter, September, 1786.

indeed of the Goſpel is different; its purpoſe is to inſtruct by precept, not to amuſe by ſpeculation; and, as its immediate relation is to practice, its maxims are plain, forcible, and comprehenſive, rather than curious or abſtruſe. The foundations, however, are not the leſs ſolid, nor the ſtructure leſs conſiſtent. Every concluſion, if inveſtigated with the niceſt and moſt ſcrupulous attention, will be found perfectly conformable to the ſoundeſt philoſophy, and deduced from the moſt intimate acquaintance with the mind of man.

Such is the nature of the propoſition contained in the words of my text. It is a truth, which appeals to common experience for confirmation, and yet is founded on ſome of the moſt curious principles in moral ſcience. That man, in his temporal ſtate, is ſubject to the influence of two diſtinct principles, the ſenſitive and the rational ſoul, the fleſh and the ſpirit, was one of the leading maxims in the beſt philoſophy of the ancient world. The former of

theſe

theſe ſeems to depend altogether on the organization of our mortal frame; the latter appears to be the action or energy of that immortal part, which derives its exiſtence more immediately from the divine eſſence, and, we are informed, bears in ſome degree the ſtamp of the divine image. The one ſeems neceſſary to attach us to this preſent life, and to lead us cheerfully through our pilgrimage; the other prevents the too great violence of this attachment, and is even neceſſary to direct the affections to their proper objects. Paſſion is the ſpring, which in this life brings us forth to action, and gives a conſequence to the things upon earth; reaſon checks, confines, and regulates its exceſſes.

As paſſion is no other than a modification of the animal appetites, it is juſtly eſteemed the inferior principle; it lives with the body, it dies with the body; and, as reaſon is the effect of that immortal energy, which even in this life is more immediately under the direction of the ALMIGHTY,

MIGHTY, with which indeed his Holy Spirit is ſuppoſed occaſionally to co-operate, it is that which gives us this rank and eminence among created beings, and is the ground-work of ſcience and of ſocial happineſs. The former we enjoy in common with the brute-creation, and, when indulged to exceſs, it levels us with inferior animals, or perhaps degrades us beneath them; by the latter we are enabled to attain the knowledge, and to conciliate the love of our great CREATOR, and indeed to raiſe ourſelves to the condition of angels.

Beſides the uſes, therefore, which I before pointed out for theſe diſtinct principles, there is yet another: for, they appear eſſential to this ſtate of probation, to which our divine maſter has thought proper to ſubmit us, preparatory to a ſtate of more perfect felicity. Paſſion is the ſource of all our guilt; hence proceed murders, thefts, adulteries, and that numerous train of moral evils, by which human nature is debaſed, and human ſociety diſtracted: Rea-

ſon

ſon is the corrector of theſe abuſes, by which we foreſee their conſequences and the means of avoiding them: and thus (according to the apoſtle) a perpetual conflict is maintained between reaſon and paſſion, the fleſh and the ſpirit.

But the GOD, whom we adore, is a GOD of mercy; and, as ſuch, it is conſiſtent with his gracious providence to incline the balance in our favour, and to afford us all advantages in a conteſt where our all is at ſtake. It is the expreſs purpoſe of Chriſtianity to come in aid of the rational principle, and enable us to vanquiſh effectually all our ſpiritual enemies, by making known to us the will of our CREATOR, and directing our view to conſequences, above the reach of the human underſtanding unaſſiſted by divine revelation. Thus Reaſon tells us, that it is our intereſt to regulate the paſſions, and to hold them in proper ſubjection; Chriſtianity tells us, that ſuch is the expreſs command of our heavenly Father. Reaſon informs us, that to be moderate

derate and virtuous will inſure our temporal happineſs, and that vicious courſes will end in the ruin of our fortune, our reputation, and our health; but Chriſtianity announces to us an eternity of happineſs or miſery, dependent upon our conduct; and aſſures us, that, if we become captives to our corrupt paſſions, we ſhall feel all the weight of almighty vengeance, through ages of pain and torment, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

After this, my brethren, can it be neceſſary to enter more minutely into the imprudence, the folly, the danger, the damnation of indulging the corrupt and vicious propenſities? Can it be neceſſary, to direct your attention to the fate of ſtates and empires, to exhibit there the vices of paſſion bringing down upon the guilty nation anarchy and deſolation; to exhibit the diſſipated and abandoned conſpiring againſt the community, and ſacrificing, to their own corrupt luſts, the intereſts of millions? Obſerve well the ſelfiſhneſs, the rapacity,

which

which are occaſioned by ungoverned paſſions and deſires. Obſerve all the delicate bonds, which connect men in ſociety, and form our beſt enjoyments, rudely burſt aſunder. Hear the complaints of the deluded friend, the injured huſband, the ruined virgin, the miſerable parent. Mark the horrid tales of perjuries, breaches of truſt, ſeductions, aſſaſſinations, parricides! and then judge whether that people does not exiſt under the ſevereſt curſe of the ALMIGHTY, whom he has delivered over to the dominion of luxury and paſſion.

But, to judge more perfectly concerning the neceſſity of ſubduing our paſſions, let us but remark their effects upon the individual. The man, who is under the dominion of paſſion, is incapable of any great or virtuous undertaking. The abject ſlave of appetite, he mingles with the common inſtinctive herd, and his thoughts are never elevated for a moment above the groveling purſuits of the brute-creation. Propelled by the rage of paſſion, every trifling incident

dent is able to diſappoint and diſconcert him; and, as the gratification of appetite is tranſitory, the very completion of his wiſhes is ſatiety and diſguſt. As guilt is the conſequence of every unlawful paſſion, he has to encounter ſhame, and remorſe of conſcience, and the fear of diſcovery. As expence and profuſion are ever connected with vicious purſuits, he is generally in want, he is haunted with importunate creditors, he is abridged of his liberty, he is obliged to ſubmit to innumerable meanneſſes: and poſſibly he is at length engaged in ſome criminal action to ſupply his prodigality, which brings him, with ſorrow and late contrition, to an ignominious end.

The ſtill more alarming effects of criminal paſſions in the other ſex are too obvious to require a detail. The deluded female commences her career with public infamy and ſcorn; and ends it with vice, drunkenneſs, ill-treatment, want, cold, hunger, diſeaſe, and untimely death.

To

To theſe, give me leave to add, on religious principles, another argument: and that is, unleſs the ſpirit be victorious over the paſſions, you can have no part or inheritance in the kingdom of GOD. The grace of GOD is a ſtranger to the heart, while ſinful paſſions are predominant there. This is in truth the only mark, by which we are enabled to judge of the ſtate of our ſouls. If all be tranquil and compoſed; if the love of virtue, *the peace of God and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, be within you, you are ſafe and happy. If violent and unlawful paſſions, if unruly appetites and deſires have poſſeſſion of your heart, conclude that GOD *has given you over to a reprobate mind*, and nothing leſs than immediate repentance can ſave you from utter perdition.

It would doubtleſs, my brethren, be highly ſatisfactory to be able to guide you out of the track of theſe alarming evils, and to be inſtrumental in reſcuing you from the fatal empire of paſſion. Your own ſagacity will point out many motives and expedients;

pedients; and, if you heartily wiſh and reſolve to dedicate yourſelves to the practice of virtue, the grace of GOD will ſtrengthen and aſſiſt you. I ſhall nevertheleſs briefly ſtate a few of the moſt practicable means of cultivating good and virtuous affections, and of eradicating vicious and corrupt propenſities from the heart.

Firſt. Let me exhort you, earneſtly to recommend yourſelves to the peculiar care and attention of the Divine Providence; to pray, morning and evening, that he will ſtrengthen your good intentions, and correct whatever he obſerves amiſs. For, if you loſe your religion, or become remiſs in theſe duties, I muſt tell you, that every other foundation of morality is laid upon the ſand; and, if you prove good, it will be, as it were, by chance.

Secondly. Whatever leiſure you may have, employ it in the reading of good books. By the term *good books*, I do not mean to confine you to books of devotion; I mean books that will inform your underſtanding

ſtanding and refine your ſentiments; all, in a word, that have a virtuous or moral tendency. By thus cultivating the intellectual pleaſures, your minds will become elevated above the ſenſual; you will experience enjoyments of the ſublimeſt nature, and unalloyed by any mixture of *gall or bitterneſs*.

Thirdly. You cannot be too careful in the choice of your company. It is almoſt unneceſſary to inform you, that the inſtances are few of perſons depraved by the natural force of paſſion, in compariſon with the multitudes who owe their ruin to the allurements of bad company. Connected with this, is the obligation to avoid moſt carefully every ſpecies of indelicacy or licentiouſneſs in converſation. In an age, indeed, when almoſt every perſon aims at the reputation of wit, it is no wonder that obſcene alluſions ſhould be in ſome meaſure in faſhion, ſince they enable a man to purchaſe the character at ſo very cheap a rate. That mind, however, which can conde-

ſcend to entertain a company in ſuch a manner; that company, who can patiently lend their attention to ſuch entertainment, muſt be filthy and depraved in no trifling degree. He muſt be a weak as well as a wicked man, who wiſhes to publiſh his vices. It may, therefore, contribute to leſſen the taſte for this ſpecies of mock wit, to remark, that it can only be from a barrenneſs of real wit that men have recourſe to it; and I have ſeldom known it practiſed but by very ſhallow perſons. Mark the obſervation, that, unleſs it be through a preconcerted deſign upon the innocence of ſome of the company, the man, who offends your modeſty and delicacy by licentious converſation, is not only a very wicked perſon, but a fool.*

In

* The *double entendre* is a ſpecies of wit, for which, if we have regard to the analogy of the name, we are chiefly indebted to our neighbours on the continent; and ſuch a practice is perfectly conſiſtent with the frivolity and littleneſs which characterize that nation. A Frenchman is perpetually attempting to be witty, without any fund of knowledge or information to furniſh him with materials. A certain critic, whoſe opinion indeed on this ſubject is not of very high authority,

In the fourth place. Be *temperate in all things.* Thoſe, who indulge in the exceſſes of the table can never anſwer properly for their own conduct; as, at ſeaſons, they will not, they cannot, be their own maſters. Beſides that temperance and ſobriety are among the firſt duties of our religion, and the practice of them will render us more particularly objects of the divine favour and protection.

Laſtly. Apply diligently to ſome lawful calling, which will abſorb your attention, and engage that active principle, the mind. Suffer your thoughts as little as poſſible to wander from the track of virtue; and, if the enemy of mankind ſhould at any time aſſail you, (for, it is in the hours

authority, taking his inſtance from the French nation, has pretended to deny the well-eſtabliſhed maxim, that *a regard to decency* is to be accounted among the certain marks of civilization. If, however, that critic will have the goodneſs to look at a note in my tranſlation of Biſhop Lowth's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 318, he will find ſome other, not leſs deciſive, proofs, that the French are by no means in that high ſtate of civilization, which he ſeems to take for granted.

of indolence that the tempter ſows his tares,) be inſtantly upon your guard, and divert your thoughts into ſome other channel either of buſineſs or devotion.

The force of habit, and the accommodating power of the human mind, afford encouragement not only to the young and innocent to perſevere in the path of virtue, but even to thoſe, who have been leſs cautious in their demeanour, to rectify their choice. The infinite ſuperiority of the intellectual over the ſenſual pleaſures has been aſſerted by all who have made the experiment; and this ought to be an inducement to every reflecting being to direct his attention to thoſe nobler objects. To acquire good habits is almoſt as eaſy as to acquire bad ones; nay, thoſe who are yet undepraved will have much more to ſurmount, will find more real difficulty, in deviating into vicious exceſſes, than in adhering to that order and regularity, in which they are already initiated; and even the habitually vicious will find the victory much eaſier than they

they at firſt conceive. The paſſions are furious aſſailants, but their ardour is preſently quelled by a ſpirited reſiſtance. No man, I preſume, who has the remoteſt belief in the truth of revealed religion, can poſſibly be at eaſe in his conſcience, while engaged in the commiſſion of thoſe crimes, the end of which he is convinced can be only a fearful *looking-for of judgement and fiery indignation.* You, who are involved in the giddy vortex of faſhionable diſſipation; you, who ſin through ignorance perhaps of your danger, or at leaſt for want of attending to it: — You I exhort to beſtow one hour's ſerious conſideration on this important ſubject. — *Behold, I call heaven and earth to record againſt you, this day, that I have ſet before you bleſſing and curſing, life and death.* — Go, then; *and, if there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit:* — Go, like the reformed Athenian youth, tear the enſigns of riot from your brow, the feſtal

garlands from about your neck. * — You have a much greater Maſter to imitate. If the ſpeech and practice of a heathen philoſopher could work ſuch a change in him; what ought the precepts of the Goſpel, and the example of the SON of GOD, to effect in us?

* Polemon, a young man of Athens of a diſſolute character, entered the ſchool of Xenocrates one day, intoxicated, and in the dreſs and character of a bacchanal, with a view of making merry at the expence of the philoſopher. Xenocrates was juſt at that time diſcourſing upon temperance and modeſty; the diſcourſe made ſuch an impreſſion upon Polemon, that it produced an immediate change in his manners. He applied himſelf to philoſophy, and ſucceeded to the care of that very ſeminary which he had attempted to diſturb and inſult. See Hor. L. ii. S. 3. Diog. Laert. L. 4. Val. Max. L. 6.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE HYPOCRITE AND THE LIBERTINE COMPARED.*

MATTHEW V. 20.

For, I ſay unto you, except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

THE SCRIBES were the teachers and guardians of the Jewiſh law; they not only had the cuſtody of the books of Moſes and the prophets, but almoſt the excluſive right of expounding them to the people; and hence the term is frequently confounded with that of *lawyer*, intimating that part of their office, which reſpected the explaining and adminiſtering of the law. The college of ſcribes is generally ſuppoſed to have ſucceeded the college of

* Preached at Fitzroy Chapel, October, 1781.

prophets, in which all the youth deſtined for the ſacred miniſtry were educated; ſo that, in its moſt extenſive import, the word comprehended almoſt all the people of letters in the Jewiſh nation; but, in a more reſtricted ſenſe, it ſeems to apply chiefly to thoſe who were members of the Sanhedrim, or great eccleſiaſtical council, as our Lord intimates in theſe words; *the ſcribes and phariſees ſit in Moſes's ſeat.*

The PHARISEES were no other than a ſect of Jews, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a particular appellation, on account of their peculiar opinions, and profeſſed a ſuperior degree of ſtrictneſs and ſeverity. As phariſees merely, they were not inveſted with any legal authority, but they had equal acceſs with the reſt of the nation to any of the offices or employments in the church. Accordingly we find that the ſcribes were taken indifferently out of all the Jewiſh ſects, (for, about the decline of their empire and religion, they were divided into many.) This is evidenced in the caſe of St.

St. Paul, when the ſcribes were divided, the one part phariſees, the other ſadducees.

The ſectaries in general, and thoſe who were of the ſcribes in particular, were the profeſſed enemies of our bleſſed LORD; as is natural to men who have high notions of themſelves and of their own opinions. They ſaw with envy his growing reputation. The ſimplicity and purity of his doctrines offended them, who had been accuſtomed to conſider piety as the concomitant only of ceremony, and the whole duties of mankind as placed in the external obſervances of the law. But, the chief cauſe of their envy was the danger which impended over their beloved ſyſtem of ceremony and ſuperſtition; the apprehenſion, that his divine penetration would diſcover the hypocriſy of their religious profeſſions, and that his daring hand would withdraw the veil, which craft and fanaticiſm had induſtriouſly woven.

That noble freedom of ſentiment, that unreſerved demeanour, which is ever connected

nected with virtue, is ſeldom acceptable to mankind, and leaſt of all to the vicious. Reſentment is a much eaſier exertion of the mind than reformation; and reproof is always ſo unpalatable a potion, that, however ſweetened with tenderneſs and delicacy, it is ſeldom taken with ſuch a willing mind as is neceſſary to the ſalutary end it is intended to accompliſh.

But theſe were not to be conſiderations with the Redeemer of mankind. He knew that irreconcilable enmity muſt be the conſequence of his boldneſs: but, truth and religion were in queſtion. He deſpiſed earthly advantages. He was fearleſs of perſecution. Death, with all its terrors, was to him a ſhadow. He was to conquer *this world, and the prince of this world. Hell and the grave* were to be ſubjected to him.

The applauſe, therefore, or the cenſure of men could not poſſibly affect his intentions: and the apprehenſions of theſe corrupt miniſters of religion were juſtified by the event. Inſtead of courting their favour, he

he attacks them without even that reſerve, which worldly prudence would perhaps judge neceſſary, or which might leave an opening or excuſe for reconciliation. Equally ſuperior to their menaces and allurements, he expoſes all their infamy; he exhibits the picture to public view: a picture, which will be inſtructive to the lateſt poſterity, affording an excellent criterion for the diſcovery and detection of that moſt complex and intricate of vices, hypocriſy, by occaſionally comparing their manners with our own.

Hypocriſy is a vice of a general character, and does not take its real form from any particular perſuaſion; a hypocrite is therefore the ſame in all ages, and whatever the church of which he profeſſes himſelf a member: a phariſee, or a pretendedly auſtere Chriſtian; a ſadducee, or a modern aſſertor of the law of nature. It will not, conſequently, be very ſurprizing, if on examination we find much congruity and reſemblance

ſemblance in the manners of the hypocrites of ancient and modern times.

The firſt inſtance of the reſemblance, which I ſhall mention, is, *the phariſees did all their deeds to be ſeen of men.* This is an invariable characteriſtic of hypocriſy, ſince it is impoſſible to deceive GOD, and ſince fortune or fame can be its only object. They accordingly *loved the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets.* Nor are the hypocrites of our age materially different in this reſpect: for, whatever pretences they may make to humility, their ambition is *to be ſeen of men*; to acquire authority, to have their good actions applauded; to be diſtinguiſhed as righteous, charitable, and devout. Thus they fooliſhly ſubſtitute the ſhort-lived commendations of the unſteady multitude, in the room of the ſincere gratulation of their own conſciences, in the room of the applauſe of the diſcerning few, in fine, in the room of the ALMIGHTY's favour.

Theſe

Theſe *whited ſepulchres*, as they are emphatically ſtyled, exhibited a conſtant diſplay of ſanctity and devotion. *For a pretence they made long prayers*; ſtanding in *the corners of the ſtreets*; not as perſons animated with real piety, in ſecrecy and ſolitude. Such are the pretenders to religion in our days; they appear to give unremitted attendance to public worſhip; and, under the ſanction of this appearance, conceal deſigns the moſt criminal and paſſions the moſt depraved. They faſted too, and aſſumed a ſorrowful and mortified aſpect: many of them indeed might probably imagine that theſe would ſerve inſtead of real, internal purity, and integrity of heart, inſtead of that religion which is evinced by facts, and which their own prophets had frequently aſſured them was abſolutely neceſſary to give them favour in the ſight of GOD.

There are other more minute points, in which the reſemblance will ſtill hold. The ancient hypocrites *made broad their phylacteries:*

*teries:** the modern frequently affect a preciſion, if not a ſingularity, in their dreſs and manner. The ancient attended to the *waſhing of cups and veſſels, and made clean the outſide:* The modern are nice obſervers of every petty ceremony; and, the omiſſion of ſome unmeaning rite, ſome immaterial point of diſcipline, is to them of more conſequence than the neglect of any great or eſſential virtue. But, though *they ſtrained out a gnat, they ſwallowed a camel.* Fraud and covetouſneſs were no crimes with them, provided they could paſs unſeen; for, they *devoured widows houſes; they compaſſed ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and, when gained, they made him two-fold more a child of hell than themſelves.* They *paid tithe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin;* (they were ſcrupulouſly exact where the object was not worth ſinning for;) *but they omitted* THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW, *judge-*

* Theſe phylacteries conſiſted of verſes, or precepts, from the books of Moſes and the prophets, written upon parchment, &c. and ſewed upon their garments.

ment,

ment, mercy, and truth. To parallel theſe inſtances might perhaps not be utterly impoſſible, but it would be an invidious taſk. There is a GOD above, and a monitor within; take heed that ye offend neither the one nor the other.

Approach now, you, who pride yourſelves, if I may ſo ſpeak, in the ſincerity of your ſin! You, who deſpiſe diſſimulation equally with —— virtue. Now exult. — Now is your hour. You have ſeen religion made the cloak of vice; you have ſeen pretended ſanctity ſhield from puniſhment—— in this world. Proceed; tell us, "that "piety is all an illuſion; — that it is an in-"ſtrument in the hands of the crafty."— "Happy for us," (you will add,) "this "is not an age favourable to hypocriſy."— —Indeed it is not; and yet perhaps we are no gainers by the boaſted revolution. Here, then, end the triumph of the libertine. — For, tell me, you who reaſon for yourſelves, and are not carried along the ſtream of popular prejudice: becauſe there is hypocriſy,

pocriſy, is there no ſuch thing as real virtue? Becauſe there are pictures, are there no originals? The hypocrite, indeed, abuſes virtue, by uſing its ſemblance to evil purpoſes; but the libertine ſtrikes at its very exiſtence. The one tacitly confeſſes its excellence, while he pretends to imitate it; the other diſowns its attributes, and ſpurns its authority. The one may indeed injure a few individuals; the other muſt injure the public, by ſupporting principles, and by affording an example, which ſap the very foundations of all morality and good government.

But, are theſe characters ſo totally diſtinct, that the libertine is on every occaſion free from hypocriſy? When ſome vile end is to be accompliſhed; when ſome criminal paſſion is to be gratified, does he then ſcruple to diſſemble? No: — He affects to deſpiſe it, becauſe his general conduct is too flagrant to admit of hypocriſy. He, who wears in common that diſguiſe, muſt be a petty ſinner, or he is preſently

preſently detected. But, when every art is exhauſted to ſupport a tottering reputation, the laſt reſource of profligacy is to intrench itſelf in an inſolent effrontery, which ſets at defiance GOD and man. Let us not miſtake; there is a nearer affinity between theſe two denominations of ſinners than either of them is willing to acknowledge. The hypocrite is no other than a painted libertine; and, when the varniſh is waſhed away, he ſtands revealed juſt the ſame falſe reaſoner, the ſame contemptible ſlave of appetite and paſſion, as the audacious profligate, who affects to diſdain the concealment of his vices. That there is little temptation to hypocriſy, and little occaſion for it at preſent, will not, I fear, prove to the honour of the preſent age; and yet there are not wanting perſons unimpeachable in their own conduct; but even theſe are deficient in that delicacy of virtue, which ſhould mark the profeſſors of a pure religion. The truth is, a falſe refinement has made hypocrites of us all, and hypo-

crites of the moſt dangerous kind; I mean, who impoſe upon themſelves. We draw a veil over our own eyes, to ſave others the trouble of appearing in maſquerade. Language is perverted, and the innocent and the guilty are undiſtinguiſhed by proper appellations. Scepticiſm and profaneneſs are called liberality of ſentiment: diſſipation and extravagance aſſume the titles of faſhion and refinement; impudence and indelicacy thoſe of modeſt aſſurance, wit, and humour. Deliberate murder is termed an act of honour; and the extreme of licentiouſneſs is dignified by the very polite and faſhionable phraſe, GAIETY. But, what is the true interpretation of this term, GAIETY? — It is a perpetual round of drunkenneſs and debauchery. — It is the infamy of gaming-houſes. — It is to blaſpheme GOD, to injure human ſociety. If we enquire into the deſtruction of empires; its cauſe we ſhall find to have been, in general, a taſte for this GAIETY. If we look into the diſgrace and ruin of families, GAI-

ETY

ETY has effected it. GAIETY has ſeduced unguarded innocence; GAIETY has committed murder; GAIETY has, on ſome occaſions, concluded its career by an end very unſuitable to the real import of the word, by ſuicide.

But, in the name of reaſon, is the man, who debaſes human nature below mere animal inſtinct; who has no enjoyments but of a ſenſual and depraved kind; who, with all the ſelfiſhneſs of ſenſuality, regards the whole human race, only as he can make them ſubſervient to his groſs ideas of pleaſure; who has never conſidered the nature of moral good and evil; who lives deſtitute of any fixed principles, deſtitute of thought or reflexion; and, without rudder or compaſs, is driven about with every guſt of paſſion; who either diſbelieves in a GOD, or in fact denies his providence by acting continually in direct oppoſition to his divine commands; is this perſon likely to prove a ſteady friend, a truſty agent, a faithful and affectionate huſband, a good

father? Or is he, who is thus infamous in private life, like to be better in a public capacity? — "But, he may reform." Would to heaven, it were ſo eaſy a matter to ſtep at once from the extreme of vice to that of religion and virtue! But, *there is more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, who need no repentance*;— and with reaſon, for it is a ſingular event. It requires no great exertion to refrain from ſin at firſt; but, when once engaged, it is a ſinking ſtate, and requires a mighty force to extricate us. Nor indeed is this an age, as was before obſerved, to hope much for reformation; ſince libertines have now not only the advantage of paſſing without puniſhment or cenſure, but are as acceptable with the generality of the world, as if their characters were without a blemiſh. Thus then it ſtands: while vice is ſo ſucceſsful, it is not likely to deſiſt; and, unleſs all thinking perſons would determine to treat it with that contempt and abhorrence it deſerves,

to

to ſhun the company of the abandoned, to expel them from their ſociety; we but expoſe ourſelves to ridicule, when we urge repentance from what is apparently attended with ſo little inconvenience. Among the people of GOD, even in their moſt depraved ſtate, ſome diſtinction was always maintained between the treatment of the oppoſite characters of vice and virtue, and the Scripture abounds with exhortations againſt the contagious nature of ſin. *Enter not into the path of the wicked*, ſays the wiſeſt of men; *avoid it, paſs not by it; turn from it, and paſs away.* Leaſt of all is it conſiſtent with the purity of our religion, thus to break down the barrier between good and evil, by putting them upon an equal footing. *Beware of evil-workers*, ſays the great apoſtle, *and be not thou partaker with them: ſhouldeſt thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? I wrote unto you*, ſays he in another place, *not to company with fornicators, or with the covetous, or with extortioners; if any man, that is called*

a brother, be a fornicator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch a one, no, not to eat.

Thus far it appeared neceſſary to urge, leſt, in avoiding one extreme, we ſhould, as is too common, fall into another, yet more fatal. But what! is there not another mode of action? Is there not another courſe to ſteer? Becauſe we are not to imitate the corrupt manners of the ſcribes and phariſees, are we therefore to adopt thoſe of the publicans and ſinners? We have ſeen that theſe forms of vice, however they may appear to differ, are more nearly related than is generally ſuppoſed;—and, will not the compaſs of nature, reaſon, or religion, ſupply us with another character? It will, my brethren, the real Chriſtian, the true diſciple of our Lord. Behold the portrait; and I truſt it is not quite out of nature, weak and imperfect as we are.

Mark, then, the beauteous aſſemblage. — Meekneſs and Simplicity are ſeated on his brow; Patience and Humility dwell in his

his boſom; and Cheerfulneſs, like a winged cherub, plays about his lips. Unpurſued by a diſordered conſcience, unruffled by the intruſion of criminal paſſions or deſires, that peace and ſerenity, which he himſelf poſſeſſes, he imparts to others; and, like the ſun, the nobleſt, and perhaps moſt uſeful object of the viſible creation, he diffuſes light and comfort to all around him. Although, like his bleſſed Maſter, he be *meek and lowly of heart*, like him affable and obliging, *apt to teach*; he is too conſcious of the dignity he acquires from the rectitude of his life to ſtoop to any thing mean or unworthy. Hypocrites and ſinners may be, nay muſt be, ſlaves. The practical Chriſtian only is free. He has no need of art, for he has nothing to conceal. He has made truth his ſtudy; he knows its beauty and its worth. He is *inſtructed in the law of the Lord*, and he is ready to conform to the minuteſt branch of his duty. He has inquired into the nature of things; he has ſeen the nothingneſs, the inſipidity, the

danger of thoſe gratifications, which engage the paſſions of leſs enlightened minds. He is ſatisfied that happineſs can only, with any degree of reaſon, be placed in piety, probity and charity here below, and in the well-grounded expectation of eternal life, and a crown of glory hereafter.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ON THE INSTITUTION OF PREACHING, AND THE MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.*

2 COR. XII. 14.

I ſeek not yours, but you.

WHEN the firſt teachers of our religion were called by the ſpecial appointment of ALMIGHTY GOD, they were called, not to a ſtate of opulence, of ſplendour, and of worldly enjoyment; but to a ſtate of trouble, of perſecution, and of ſorrow. They were ſent forth as *ſheep in the midſt of wolves*; they were accounted as victims, appointed to the ſlaughter. They were required to *forſake all*, even *father and mother*, nay, the deareſt of temporal poſſeſſions,

* Preached at the pariſh-church of the united pariſhes of St. George Botolph-lane, and St. Botolph Billingſgate, on being elected their lecturer.

life

life itſelf. Though it is certain that many of them were neceſſitated to accept of ſuch ſupport as the circumſtances of their followers could ſupply; and though in this they were authorized by our LORD himſelf, who commanded them, *into whatever houſe they entered, there to remain eating and drinking*, and for this plain reaſon, that *the workman is worthy of his hire*; yet, it is equally certain, that, by the ſame authority, they were prohibited from abuſing this privilege: and ſome of them, who had the intereſts of the Goſpel particularly at heart, ſeem to have taken no advantage whatever of it. The apoſtle of the Gentiles, from whoſe Epiſtle to the Corinthians I have ſelected the words of my text, *laboured working with his hands, leſt*, by making it chargeable in its infant-ſtate, he *ſhould hinder the Goſpel of Chriſt.* He therefore aſſures his Corinthian converts, that, though he had the ſame right with the other apoſtles to be maintained by them, indeed the right that every man who labours has to reap a livelihood

hood from his labour, yet he never was, and never would be burthenſome to them: *for*, he adds in the words of my text, *I ſeek not yours, but you.*

Though the apoſtles were thus unfavourably ſituated in point of worldly lucre, yet, as rational perſons, we are not to ſuppoſe that they acted without motives, or that a wild enthuſiaſm, without any proſpect of real advantage, engaged them in a life of labour and perplexity. They were conſcious they were acting under the appointment, and fulfilling the command, of the ſupreme Governor and Creator of the world. They felt, within their own boſoms, a conviction that they were ordained to a life of glory and immortality, and that their labours were conſecrated to the nobleſt purpoſes; that they were not only *working out their own ſalvation*, but that of others. They were endowed with all the ſupernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, and had ample ſcope for the gratification of all the benevolent affections in the divine power

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of working miracles. Nor were they deſtitute even of earthly advantages. The whole of temporal felicity does not conſiſt in the poſſeſſion of wealth; nor even, as ſome of the philoſophers abſurdly ſuppoſed, in an eaſy and tranquil life. The apoſtles were poſſeſſed of a treaſure far more eſtimable than theſe, the confidence and the love of their fellow-creatures. This was their earthly object, (and who could deſire a better!) their heavenly object was of a ſtill ſublimer nature. It is a natural, it is a generous, and exalted paſſion, which the apoſtle expreſſes in the words of my text: *I ſeek not yours, but you.* "Think not that I regard your temporal poſſeſſions; that I look with a longing eye to that beloved *mammon* of which I obſerve you are ſo jealouſly watchful. Its advantages to ſuch a man as myſelf would be trifling indeed; nay, the great object of my life would be counteracted by it. I deſpiſe ſenſual delights; and, for avarice, it is the paſſion of children for a glittering bauble, the attachment

attachment of fools without any ſolid ground of liking. I aſpire to a nobler poſſeſſion: it is yourſelves that I covet; your hearts, your ſouls, what *neither ruſt nor moth can corrupt, and what thieves cannot break through and ſteal.* — It is, in a word, the glory of GOD, and of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. — It is your converſion, your improvement, your ſalvation which I covet."

If the miniſters of the Goſpel are not at this day poſſeſſed of advantages equivalent to thoſe of the firſt profeſſors of our faith: if they cannot raiſe the dead, heal the ſick, cauſe the deaf to hear, or the dumb to ſpeak; if they are denied the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit: if, on theſe accounts, they are leſs ſucceſsful in their miniſtry, and are poſſeſſed of fewer means of attracting the admiration, and conciliating the eſteem of mankind; it muſt be confeſſed, on the other hand, that, in the preſent circumſtances of Chriſtianity, their taſk is leſs arduous, and their ſituation more tranquil and ſecure. We are ſhielded,

by

by the mercy of Providence, from the iron hand of Perſecution, and a wiſe eſtabliſhment has not left us entirely to the caprice of Fortune for our daily ſubſiſtance. But, it does not follow from this, my brethren, that we are all of us determined to the ſervice of the church by ſecular or mercenary motives. This is a ſlander originating in malice, and ſupported by ignorance alone. Permit me to treſpaſs a little on your time, while I endeavour to remove an imputation ſo injurious and ill-founded.* The nature of the revenues of the church of England

* I ſpeak from dear-bought experience, and from much obſervation. If this volume ſhould happen to fall into the hands of a parent who is bleſſed with a promiſing child, let me conjure him not to ſacrifice, without ſome peculiarly favourable connexion or proſpect, the object of his affections to the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion. If he conceives a ſtate of penury to be eſſential to virtue, let him find out ſome other inferior ſtation, where the feelings of the man may bear ſome proportion to his circumſtances. But let him ſpare his child the additional miſery of a refined education, ſpare him the anguiſh of diſappointed hope, and the indignities which unpatronized abilities muſt undergo even in ſearch of a competent ſubſiſtance.

is, in general, but imperfectly underſtood. It appears, however, by ſome late publications, ‡ that the whole income of the church, including that of the biſhops, the cathedral-churches, and even the two univerſities, and their reſpective colleges, is ſo inconſiderable, that, if EQUALLY divided among the whole body of the clergy, it would not amount to one hundred and fifty pounds *per annum* to each: this, if there were no biſhops or dignitaries, no univerſities for the education of youth. The diſtribution, it is true, is unequal, and in the eccleſiaſtical lottery there are ſome prizes. But, how few even of the beneficed clergy poſſeſs a clear income, *for life*, of five hundred pounds *per annum?* A ſum, which would be accounted trifling in almoſt any other rank of life, and which is exceeded by the profits of many in the very inferior, and by almoſt all in the ſu-

‡ See the Biſhop of Landaff's Letter to the Archbiſhop of Canterbury, and the other publications on that controverſy.

perior

perior commercial profeſſions. Theſe, again, as I obſerved, are prizes, which are the fortune only of a choſen few. They are chiefly the property of noble and wealthy families, and are monopolized by the relations and dependants of the great. A courſe of ſervices, or a fortunate connexion will ſometimes promote a man of merit; but, it is a melancholy fact, that many, too many, whoſe parts and underſtandings would qualify them for the firſt offices of the ſtate, whoſe claſſical eloquence might have influenced ſenates, whoſe refined manners and converſation might have poliſhed courts, are condemned, in the ſervice of the church, to languiſh through a life of labour, in ſome deſpicable curacy, without diſtinction or reward.

It appears, from theſe obſervations, that he muſt be a weak man, who, without powerful connexions, enters into the church through the hope of profit or emolument. The truth is, the love of letters, or the love of GOD, or rather, as I truſt is in general

neral the caſe, both of them united, are the only rational motives to invite a man of any abilities into the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion: A man, who is influenced by ſuch motives as theſe, is not without his conſolations: for, like the apoſtle, he *ſeeks not yours, but you.* There cannot be a more reſpectable character than a clergyman, who really diſcharges his duty; nor, in my mind, a more enviable ſituation than that of one, who diſcharges it to the ſatisfaction of his hearers. He is effectually ſerving GOD, and, if he be not poſſeſſed of wealth or dignity, theſe are amply compenſated for by confidence and eſteem.

Permit me, my brethren, to explain, in a few words, what I apprehend to be the true evangelical meaning of the phraſe, *I ſeek not yours, but you.* It is not cold approbation, nay, it is not your private friendſhip, (eſtimable as indeed I account it,) that will ſatisfy a man zealous in the cauſe of CHRIST.—He ardently deſires a more intimate union, an union of ſentiment, an

union in virtue. He wiſhes you all fellow-ſervants of the ſame Maſter with himſelf; *members of Chriſt's myſtical body:* not bound by the uncertain bonds of earthly paſſion and intereſt, but by the everlaſting union of righteouſneſs and faith. In plain terms, what he ſeeks is *you:* — *you*, not only in this life, but another; your converſion, your improvement, your ſalvation.

To effect theſe purpoſes, there are two points of conduct indiſpenſible on your parts: namely, frequent attendance on divine ſervice, and, attention when you are there. The man, who wilfully abſents himſelf from church, wrongs his own ſoul, for he throws himſelf perverſely out of the way of correction or improvement, and, whatever ſins he may through ignorance happen to commit, will *fall upon his own head:* for, inſtead of employing his talent, he conceals it in a napkin; and therefore merits the blame, not only of *an unprofitable*, but of a *wicked ſervant*.

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The work of converſion is not the work of a day; nor are the truths of the Goſpel, ſpeculative as well as practical, ſuch as can be learned without exertion or trouble. The *grace of God* is vouchſafed to *thoſe that aſk it*; but the indolent, and thoſe who wantonly reject it, *God will judge*. If it were even poſſible to attain knowledge without ſeeking it, if inſtinctively we were poſſeſſed of all the principles of morality; ſtill, the human mind is naturally prone to evil, it requires to be excited, to be quickened, to be alarmed, to be put frequently on its guard againſt the approaches of the tempter. Ill habits gain upon us as it were inſenſibly, and we may be involved in a courſe of depravity before we are aware of the conſequences, unleſs ſome friendly warning awake us from our dream of ſin, and inform us of our danger. Whatever of refined morality the preſent age can boaſt may I think modeſtly be attributed to the inſtitution of Chriſtianity, which provides for the inſtruction of ſuch as want leiſure

or diligence to obtain it by other means; ſuch as are too buſy or too poor to apply to books for information; and it is worthy of remark that vice prevails moſt in thoſe characters, and in thoſe claſſes of men, who moſt frequently abſent themſelves from public worſhip. The great, who affect to be above that plain mode of inſtruction, which our church propoſes, are diſſipated and debauched; the poor, whoſe miſerable and unhappy ſituation perhaps often keeps them away, are diſſolute, profane, and diſhoneſt. In fine, GOD has made it a poſitive duty to attend upon his ſervice; and, if there were no other reaſon, than that GOD has appointed it, that is motive ſufficient with a rational being, who reſpects the ordinance of GOD, or the welfare of his own ſoul.

Next to him, who abſents himſelf from the church, the man, who is inattentive to his duty while he is there, is moſt deſerving of cenſure: and indeed I ſee but little difference in the nature of the offence. As drowzineſs

drowzineſs or inattention are the effects of an indolent habit, and may be overcome by a little exertion, it may reaſonably be accounted ſinful to perſevere in them. I know that the blame is ſometimes laid upon the preacher; and it muſt be confeſſed that one ſermon may be better than another, the matter more uſeful, the manner more intereſting. A preacher may, it is true, ſally forth into the unfruitful wilds of ſpeculative divinity, may involve his hearers in the clouds of myſticiſm. Yet, I will venture to aver, that you will ſeldom hear a diſcourſe, from which you may not, if you are well inclined, derive inſtruction. Indeed, the plaineſt diſcourſes, thoſe which are leaſt admired, are often, I might ſay generally, more inſtructive than thoſe which amuſe the fancy and abound moſt in rhetorical embelliſhments. Beſides, while you are indulging in ſloth or negligence, it is impoſſible to ſay what you may loſe. Some uſeful precept, which might have been conducive to the whole happineſs of

your future life; ſome ſeaſonable intimation, which might reſcue you from the jaws of deſtruction, may eſcape you. In one word, it is not the preacher you affront, but your GOD AND SAVIOUR, who requires that you *ſerve him with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your ſtrength.*

I ſaid, drowzineſs and inattention are vices of habit, and by a little pains the habit may be reclaimed. Only exert yourſelves for a little, and be properly on your guard againſt them. Fix your mind on the ſubject, and purſue it, as with a deſire of committing it to memory, and attention will become eaſy in a ſhort time.

Another practice, which I would recommend, is a mode of ſelf-examination, by which every perſon may be eaſily enabled to judge of his progreſs in religious knowledge, and which conſiſts in putting to himſelf a few plain queſtions as he returns from divine ſervice: as, "What have I learned to-day? With what truths, formerly unexplored, have I made myſelf acquainted?

quainted? Have I diſcovered any duty, in which I was deficient? Have the embers of any latent virtues been awakened within me? Or, is my heart warmed with the general love of GOD and religion?" If, indeed, you go not away impreſſed with ſome important ſentiment, conclude that you have ſpent your time very unprofitably; and that ſervice only, which brings improvement to yourſelf, is acceptable with GOD.

SERMON XIII.

ON PREPARATION FOR DEATH.*

LUKE VIII. 52.

She is not dead, but ſleepeth.

THERE are certain ſubjects, from the near contemplation of which the human mind naturally ſhrinks back with horror and diſguſt: and of this kind is the melancholy, and often painful, termination of our exiſtence. Indeed, in the bare idea of death, there are ſo many circumſtances calculated to alarm our frail and imperfect natures, that we cannot wonder at the ſentiment which it generally inſpires. To be rudely torn from a world, with which we have ſcarcely formed an acquaintance;

* A funeral ſermon, preached at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, July 18, 1784. The text appointed by the friends of the deceaſed.

to

to be parted in a moment from all thoſe ſplendid trifles, which have engroſſed our attention; to ſtand the ſhock of an eternal ſeparation from every loved connexion; to ſink into nothing; to cloſe our exiſtence with languor and anxiety; with pain and agony: — 'Tis a fearful idea! and, if religion preſented no further proſpect to our view; *if in this life only we had hope, then were we of all* creatures *moſt miſerable!*

As the miſſion of CHRIST, however, was in all reſpects a diſpenſation of mercy, that great attribute of the Deity appears ſupereminent in this point: the firſt object of his teaching was to deliver man from that *King of Terrors*; *and to bring life and immortality to light by his Goſpel.*

Though we cannot deny that the Pagan world was poſſeſſed of ſome obſcure and indiſtinct opinions, which reſpected a life after this, they were founded on too ſlight a baſis to be productive of any ſolid conſolation. In the hours, when cheerfulneſs and hope preſided, the ingenious fictions of Elyſium,

Elyſium, and the ſtate of the dead, adorned by the luxuriancy of poetic fancy, might afford matter for ſpeculation, or might fill agreeably the blanks of diſcourſe. Nature might be inveſtigated, or the attributes of the Divinity adduced, to lend a colour of argument to a flattering idea. But, the belief of a future ſtate did not pierce their hearts, nor did the moral arguments in its favour entirely ſatisfy their underſtandings; and, in the hours of adverſity, of ſolitude, and ſorrow, we find the wiſeſt of the heathen world benighted in ſcepticiſm, and repining in deſpair.

Though the partial revelation, which dimly enlightened the Jewiſh nation, ſtrengthened, by the acceſſion of ſome extraordinary facts, the feeble reaſonings of unaſſiſted Nature; yet the evidence, on the whole, was far from ſatisfactory; and, in conſequence, we find, that, at the time of the manifeſtation of the Goſpel, a conſiderable body of the moſt learned among the Jews denied that Moſes had afforded any

any information concerning a future ſtate, and even poſitively affirmed, that *there is no reſurrection of the dead.*

Such was the ſtate of things, when CHRIST and his apoſtles appeared, announcing the *glad tidings of the kingdom of God*, and inculcating the doctrines of *repentance for the remiſſion of ſins, and everlaſting life.* It appears, accordingly, that all the doctrines, all the diſcourſes of our bleſſed LORD uniformly tended to the eſtabliſhment of this important point. But, as he rightly conſidered, that Experience is the moſt powerful of all preceptors, he ſpoke no leſs forcibly to the ſenſes than to the underſtanding; he held a picture to the eyes, and confirmed by actions what in words he had aſſerted.

The moſt ſtriking of all his miracles; thoſe indeed on which he ſeems to have laid the greateſt ſtreſs; and to which he moſt confidently appeals, were thoſe which tended to confirm the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead. Perhaps indeed there was

was no effectual method of convincing mankind ſhort of actually demonſtrating the poſſibility of what he advanced, and evincing to them, by their own experience, that what was uſually conſidered as the termination of exiſtence is no other than the paſſage from one life to the other, the ſleep of the body, occaſioned by the temporary ſeparation of the ſoul. As there is the moſt perfect conformity between his actions and his words, he ſeems peculiarly ſtudious of uſing ſuch phraſeology as might leaſt countenance the vulgar prejudices. He generally treats the ſtate of death only as a ſleep. Thus, when the beloved Lazarus was dead, and even conſigned to the dark regions of the tomb, he tells his diſciples: *Our friend Lazarus* SLEEPETH; and, in the very extraordinary tranſaction, which is under our immediate conſideration, he aſſerts, in defiance of the ridicule of the multitude: *the damſel is not dead, but* SLEEPETH.

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The doctrine being once eſtabliſhed by well-atteſted facts, and placed beyond the reach of doubt by his own reſurrection, we are not to wonder that ſimilar exertions of the divine power are no longer diſplayed. It can be of little importance to recal the departed ſpirit from its manſions of reſt to linger out a few years longer in this poor terreſtrial ſtate of exiſtence, ſince the longeſt life is but a point on the vaſt ſcale of eternity: ſince *the days of man are as graſs*; ſince *he flouriſhes only as a flower of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven.* The great object was to demonſtrate the poſſibility of his doctrine; and happily, by the very means of evincing it, he eſtabliſhed his own veracity, in the proofs which he exhibited that he was in reality *a teacher ſent from God.*

This then appears inconteſtibly the ſtate in which the ſcheme of the Goſpel-redemption and Goſpel-revelation has placed the creature man. Death is no longer to be conſidered as the tremendous concluſion of being:

being: it is a lying down to reſt, a ſlumber from which we are to awake to an eternity of happineſs or miſery; a hell of torment, or a heaven of glory. On this important circumſtance depend all the other branches of the Goſpel-ſyſtem: hence the invincible obligation to piety and virtue, hence the beauty of holineſs, and the acceptable ſacrifice of repentance, of a *broken and a contrite heart*.

Subordinate to this great object, permit me to urge, from that part of Scripture which is at preſent under our conſideration, one practical point, which is of the utmoſt conſequence: and that is, the neceſſity of being always prepared for the diſſolution of theſe *earthly tabernacles*. And, with this view, I ſhall beg leave to recal your attention to ſome of the circumſtances of the narrative, juſt preceding the words, which form the baſis of this diſcourſe.

There came, ſays the evangeliſt, *a ruler of the ſynagogue, and threw himſelf at the feet of Jeſus*. — His caſe was deſperate; his mode of

of entreaty was therefore in the higheſt degree urgent as well as humble. *He had one only daughter*, one only prop for his declining years. "Alas!" ſays a pathetic writer, "where there are many children, one can "more eaſily be parted with, for the ſurviving may perhaps ſupply the comforts "of the dead; but, when every joy and "hope muſt live or die in one, the loſs admits of no conſolation." The daughter of Jairus was young; and, at the very time the application was made to JESUS, *ſhe lay a-dying*. A ſlight interruption impedes the operation of even this laſt expedient; and, before our LORD could reach the houſe, a fatal meſſenger arrives with the unwelcome, though not unexpected, intelligence: *thy daughter is dead, trouble not the maſter*.

The alarming circumſtance in this affecting narrative, and the practical concluſion, to which it is my deſire at preſent to direct your attention, (for, we have already conſidered the apparent deſign of the tranſaction,)

action,) is the abſurdity of flattering ourſelves with the continuance of health and life, whatever our circumſtances or ſituation; ſince we are, at the very beſt, but *ſtrangers and pilgrims, and have here no continuing habitation.** Jairus was rich; he was the ruler of a ſynagogue: but, of how little efficacy is wealth or ſtation to the attainment of happineſs! The daughter of Jairus was an only daughter; the delight, the ornament of his declining years. Yet the diſtreſſes of a fond parent could not ſtop the inexorable decree, or perſuade the ſlayer to ſtay his hand. The daughter of Jairus was young, and yet innocence is found an ineffectual defence, and youth itſelf unable to reſiſt the aſſault of the univerſal Deſtroyer. "Decrepit Age," ſays the pious writer, whom I have already quoted, "expects death, and frequently ſolicits it; "but immature and tender Youth looks

* The lady, by whoſe deceaſe this diſcourſe was occaſioned, died very ſuddenly, and in the bloom of life.

" fearfully on the approach of the awful " meſſenger of GOD."

You, my brethren, have doubtleſs, in the courſe of your experience, more than once beheld the gay, the proſperous, the beautiful, and the young, untimely arreſted in their career of life, and torn from the embraces of their lamenting friends. So inefficacious are all earthly means of deferring this alarming ſentence, that not virtue itſelf, which defends us from moſt of the calamities attendant on mortality, can ſhield us from this. The niceſt caution, the utmoſt prudence, the univerſal love of our fellow-creatures cannot alter our nature in this reſpect, or inſure us even a moment of enjoyment in the moſt affluent circumſtances. If, my brethren, innocence of life, if purity of intention, if the moſt conciliating manners, if gentleneſs of diſpoſition, affability of deportment, if the ſtrict performance of every domeſtic duty; if unaffected piety, and the moſt exact attention to all the offices of devotion, could reſcue from

from the ſtroke of death, this congregation would not at this moment lament the loſs of one of its brighteſt ornaments. If theſe, and other excellent qualities beſt known to thoſe, who beſt knew the poſſeſſor of them, could detain on earth a beloved ſpirit; the diſconſolate huſband, and the dejected friend would not at this moment lament in vain. The fatal ſummons arrives, *as a thief in the night.* — To-day it is my lot, to-morrow yours. So delicate and complex is the frame of man, that, rather than be ſurprized at its impermanency, we have cauſe to wonder that ſo many inſtances are found of protracted exiſtence. Every ſtep we tread is upon precipices and quickſands: *the ſnares of death*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *encompaſs me about, and the pains of hell get hold upon me.*

Go to the houſe of mourning, gay and thoughtleſs ſons and daughters of diſſipation.—Behold the mournful confuſion, the ſpeechleſs ſorrow. — Behold the pale image of mortality; and let your conſciences ſpeak

with an eloquence irreſiſtible, and which the ſight of death can alone inſpire! Behold this, and tell me, what is there to attach you longer to ſin and to the world? What ſhall ſeparate you longer from the only object that deſerves your attention? I truſt, with the apoſtle, *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

The life of man, conſidered in its moſt extenſive view, is but a ſhort preparation for that which is to endure for ever. "In "a certain part of the world," ſays an ancient writer, "there are creatures produ-"ced, which live but a ſingle day. Of "theſe, therefore, that which dies at the "eighth hour, dies well advanced in life; "that which dies at ſun-ſet, dies in hoary "old age; and that which endures till "midnight, may be accounted a prodigy. "—— Compare our longeſt life with eter-

"nity;

" nity; what great advantage can we boaſt " over theſe little inſects? ſince our ex- " iſtence, in ſuch a compariſon, is not " that of a ſingle day." Let the conſide- ration repreſs our pride; let it increaſe our vigilance. You who have the faireſt pro- bability on your ſide, conſider that you ex- iſt in the midſt of dangers, of accidents, and diſeaſes; you in middle life muſt, according to the order of nature, confine your views to a very moderate period; and you, who totter on the brink of *the pit*, how long can you expect to linger yet?— A month? a year? Two or three at the moſt? The ſleep of ſin is more fatal than the ſleep of death.— In the words of inſpi- ration, therefore: *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light!*

If, my brethren, virtue cannot reſcue from the univerſal ſentence of temporal death; the promiſes of the Goſpel aſſure us of its power to remove from us the dan- gers of eternal death. In the houſe of

mourning, in the ears of the diſconſolate parent, the Redeemer of mankind pronounced this memorable ſentence: *ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth.* Let us not ſuppoſe the intent of the words confined to a particular occaſion. Let us not ſuppoſe, though an immediate miracle does not enſue, that the redemption of CHRIST and the operation of his power are leſs efficacious than during his abode on earth. The whole compaſs of endleſs time is but a point in the infinite comprehenſion of GOD; and if, at the call of our REDEEMER, we do not ariſe to a further enjoyment of this world; at his call we ſhall yet ariſe (if deſerving of it) to the enjoyment of a better.

Poſſeſſed of this truth, we are perhaps poſſeſſed of more than a whole ſyſtem of morality; ſince I can hardly conceive it poſſible for any reflecting being ever to be deliberately wicked, if he could be ſo provident as always to have death and judgement in his mind. There is, my brethren, one only effectual method of avoiding the fear

of

of death; and that is, preparing for it as we ought; there is one only mode of preparation, and that is, a holy and religious life. Supported by the *teſtimony of conſcience*, the real Chriſtian meets the King of Terrors with calmneſs and complacency. While the mortal frame is tortured in every fibre, the bleſſed confidence of enjoyment in another world relieves effectually the ſufferings of this. While the tear of affection trembles in the eye for thoſe beloved objects which are left behind, a firm hope and reliance on the mercy and good providence of GOD diſperſes every gloomy apprehenſion, and raiſes the ſoul to an anticipation of that bliſs, which it is going to enjoy. This is indeed, not to die; this is not to experience what the captive tyrant called *the bitterneſs of death*. This is only *to ſleep*, to repoſe in the *boſom of the Lord Jeſus*; to lie down to reſt, and to awake to glory. This is what diſarrays death of all its terrors, makes it an object of emulation to the good, of envy to the wicked. This it was

that dictated the aſſertion of the Pſalmiſt; *Precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of his ſaints*; and induced Balaam to exclaim: *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his!*

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

ON EDUCATION.*

EXODUS XX. 15.

Thou ſhalt not ſteal.

IT will ſcarcely admit of a diſpute, that intereſt and duty equally conſtrain us to deſire the promotion of virtue: intereſt, becauſe in the virtue of individuals the commonwealth will find its beſt ſecurity, and we may enjoy our lives and properties more exempt from the danger and apprehenſion of moleſtation; duty, becauſe it is the abſolute command of ALMIGHTY GOD,

* Preached at St. Luke's, Middleſex, in June, 1783; for the benefit of the charity-ſchool.

Should any reſemblance be found between ſome parts of this ſermon, and Dr. Parr's admirable Diſcourſe on Education, publiſhed in 1785, the reader will ſee, by the date, that no charge of plagiariſm can be admitted; the ſermon being now printed almoſt verbatim as it was preached.

not

not to be weary in doing good. The exerciſe of mercy and benevolence is one of the firſt precepts of our religion; and in this inſtance it is attended with a particular promiſe of future recompence: *He that converteth a ſinner from the error of his way ſhall ſave his own ſoul.*

The alarming increaſe of thoſe crimes, which interrupt the good order of ſociety, calls for every exertion of the human faculties to reſtrain the progreſs of vice and depravity. This diſcourſe will, therefore, not conſiſt of a diſquiſition concerning the nature of the vice which is prohibited in the words of my text, but rather of an inquiry into the means of preventing it. In this I do not apprehend that I ſhall deviate very greatly from the ſcope and ſpirit of the commandment; ſince I am of opinion that it not only includes an injunction to abſtain from every act of diſhoneſty ourſelves, but alſo to exert our utmoſt endeavours to prevent it in others.

Some

Some of the moſt enlightened philoſophers and legiſlators, who have treated of this ſubject, have recommended, above all human means, a ſedulous attention to the education of youth: among theſe I ſhall only mention Solomon: *when wiſdom*, ſays that firſt of moraliſts, *entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleaſant unto thy ſoul, diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee, underſtanding ſhall keep thee:* and again, *train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* It will not, therefore, I preſume, be thought unſeaſonable to inquire a little into the power of inſtruction and cultivation in controuling the vicious propenſities of human nature, in reforming the heart, and reducing it to habits of decency, order, and induſtry. This will ſerve alſo to confine our inveſtigation within reaſonable limits; and will prevent that confuſion, which generally reſults from crouding a variety of objects within the boundaries of a ſhort diſcourſe.

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The ſuperiority of the Scripture-hiſtory over thoſe fantaſtical theories, which aſſert the innocence and virtue of human-nature, in what they are pleaſed to term its natural or undepraved ſtate, a very ſlight acquaintance with the manners of uncivilized countries will ſufficiently demonſtrate. That happineſs and virtue, which has been the theme of ſo much declamation, is found to exiſt only in the ſplendid viſions of fancy and romance. Man in a ſavage ſtate is the moſt malignant perhaps of the whole animal creation, and exhibits only the melancholy ruins of an exalted nature, the undoubted veſtiges of his fall and corruption. Not a ſentiment of virtue, not one generous emotion, but is the effect of inſtruction and art: the care of Providence muſt accompany us through every ſtage o our exiſtence; and knowledge, which is derived from GOD, muſt complete the happineſs of the creature he has formed.

If we trace the naked and unſocial ſavage riſing by juſt gradations to all the arts of life,

life, we ſhall find knowledge, and chiefly religious knowledge, the conducting ſtar, that guides to order and felicity. View him in the firſt rude ſtage of exiſtence, without ſecurity and without comfort, expoſed to all the inclemencies of elements, in a ſtate of war with every other creature, and particularly with his own ſpecies; ſnatching, as occaſion offers, an uncertain ſubſiſtance; without ſhelter in the winter, without ſupport in his ſickneſs; yielding up his breath like the beaſts of the field, or perhaps, in the extremity of his weakneſs, the living prey of ſome more ferocious animal. Obſerve next, a ray of the divine wiſdom enlightening him in this benighted ſtate, and directing him to ſeek in ſociety a partial remedy for that curſe, to which he was ſubjected, and the earth itſelf was ſubjected for his ſake. Obſerve the benevolent affections in their firſt commencement; the domeſtic, and the filial engagements inſenſibly leading to that univerſal love, which is to be the baſis of his happineſs. Yet his faculties

faculties and his affections are bounded ſtill, and the malignity of his nature diſturbs that repoſe, which, in ſuch a ſtate of life, might perhaps be admitted as a ſubſtitute for enjoyment. Tribe plunders tribe, and the momentary poſſeſſion is the object of envy and of rapine. The firſt exertions of the rational faculties are ſeen in cunning and in fraud. Societies are deſtroyed by general contentions; private happineſs is interrupted by undue exertions of ſuperior force. Here again the voice of GOD interpoſes, aud traces out the limits of human deſires. A happy diſtinction of property takes place: and among the firſt commands, iſſued with all the ſolemnity of thunders, lightning, and a thick cloud, that overſhadowed the mount of GOD, was this: *thou ſhalt not ſteal.*

It is, I think, no inconſiderable proof in favour of the utility of knowledge, that the Chriſtian diſpenſation was offered to man in one of the moſt enlightened periods of ſociety, when the traditions of the firſt ages,

ages, the partial revelations of the divine will, had ſerved as the baſis of that ſtructure of wiſdom and policy, which was raiſed by the united exertions of the moſt enlarged underſtandings among the human race. To this we may add, that the Chriſtian revelation is calculated for man in ſociety, the more informed our minds, the fitter we are to profit from its precepts, and to reduce them to practice; and that the ſublimity of its doctrines, and the purity of its diſcipline, preſuppoſe the arts of life to have made no inconſiderable progreſs.

But it will perhaps be more to our purpoſe to deſcend from generals to particulars; from hiſtorical illuſtration to the direct application of the ſubject to the circumſtances of the preſent times. Let us, therefore, purſuing the plan of reaſoning glanced at in the exordium of this diſcourſe, and which indeed the nature of the ſubject itſelf points out, proceed to inquire how far it is our INTEREST as well as

our

our DUTY to provide for the good education of the poor.

First. By the inſtruction of youth, and particularly by that uſeful mode of inſtruction purſued in the charity-ſchools of this kingdom, you furniſh them with proper employment; and, by placing them in ſome active ſphere of life, you relieve them from the temptation of *ſtealing* for the ſake of ſubſiſtance. There are only two cauſes which can plunge a thinking being into that ſtate of deſpair, which engages him to bid defiance to the laws of his country: and theſe are, an exceſſive and habitual attachment to vice and diſſipation; or actually the want of honourable means of placing himſelf above neceſſity.

However, therefore, the poſition, "that Learning is the handmaid of Virtue," may be diſputed; no ſober perſon will aſſert, that to inſtruct young perſons in reading, writing, and in ſome uſeful occupation, is not of ſervice to the community; ſince it is a ſelf-evident propoſition, that this muſt be

be a moſt probable method of weakening at leaſt both of the motives to diſhoneſty, which I have pointed out. So far then you are ſerving ſociety, by preventing thoſe, in whoſe favour I addreſs you, from becoming guilty of crimes. But, who can ſay how much poſitive good you may be doing in other reſpects? Who can ſay to what degree of excellence one of the leaſt of theſe may hereafter arrive? Inſtead of outlaws and aſſaſſins, theſe objects of your humanity may hereafter be enrolled among the benefactors of mankind. That happy union of genius and induſtry, which atchieves great actions, is chiefly found among thoſe who have paſſed their early years in the ſtruggles of adverſity. Little as we ſuſpect it, we have perhaps before us a group, in which the all-ſeeing eye of Providence may diſcern the ingenious mechanic; the elegant artiſt; the intelligent merchant; the invincible ſoldier; the ſtaff of our political exiſtence, the generous, the enterprizing ſeaman. Theſe will ſpend

their lives in your ſervice, they will defend you abroad, they will improve and enrich you at home. Education is the only mean, whereby you can give ſcope to genius. The inventors of arts, the refiners of manners, the improvers of ſcience, are called forth only by cultivation and care.

But, ſecondly, By educating the poor, you not only put them in the way of being uſeful, and remove them from the temptation of being vicious; but you fortify their minds with ſound and ſalutary principles. The neceſſity of a religious education to the welfare of mankind has ſeldom been queſtioned. An author,* indeed, by no means favourable in general to the intereſts of religion, is compelled to confeſs, that the prevalence of the Epicurean philoſophy was one of the cauſes, which contributed to the very rapid decline of the Roman greatneſs: if on no other account, by leſſening religious awe, and the ſanctity

* Monteſquieu.

of

of oaths. For theſe reaſons, ſelf-intereſt recommends a proper attention to the education of the poor; and the poſition is ſupported by a ſeries of incontrovertible facts: moſt of the unhappy perſons, whoſe lives are forfeited for depredations committed on ſociety, are perſons without education.

I obſerved, that DUTY coincided with intereſt in enforcing the exerciſe of benevolence on this occaſion. The principles of humanity and the precepts of religion dictate to us *to do good unto all men*; *to love mercy*; and to adminiſter to all the neceſſities of our fellow-creatures, ſpiritual as well as temporal. It remains, therefore, to demonſtrate, how far you fulfil theſe injunctions in withholding youth from ignorance and vice. Suffer your imaginations to accompany me for a moment to the obſcure retreat of poverty and wretchedneſs. Behold the child of penury commence his career under inauſpicious omens! Behold him an infant beggar, whoſe occupation

bids defiance to diffidence and ſhame, the proper guardians and ornaments of youth. Behold him made callous by the ſcoffs and inhumanity of the multitude; and happy to find a protector in any abandoned villain who ſtands forth in his defence. Behold him expoſed to the ſeductions of bad company, and the temptations of want. Early initiated in all the habits of profaneneſs and licentiouſneſs, without even the knowledge of his GOD to prevent or to reſtrain him, what virtue, what ſenſe of decency can be expected from him? He begins to be a thief, before he has ceaſed to be a child. Green in years, he is matured in wickedneſs. A monſter of depravity and brutiſhneſs; humanity and religion are extinct, or rather never had a place in his heart. Behold the unavailing anxiety of his miſerable parents; behold him *bring down their grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave.* The following ſcene will exhibit him confirmed in the practice of every crime, at which human nature revolts. — He is a common

common plunderer and aſſaſſin. He violates no rule of juſtice, for he never was acquainted with any. He has no ſentiments of compaſſion; compaſſion he never met with, compaſſion he never felt: and he falls a victim to laws, which he had never conſidered, of which indeed he had perhaps ſcarcely any knowledge or apprehenſion. If we contemplate the unhappy female, nurtured in ſimilar circumſtances, the *pathos* is the ſame, with the additional horrors of proſtitution, diſeaſe, ſeduction of others, and every curſe, which beauty, unprotected by principle, can bring upon the poſſeſſor and the world.

Such are the arguments, my brethren, which intereſt and duty offer to your conſideration; arguments unanſwerable in my opinion, and only to be reſiſted by thoſe, who are exempted from all the common feelings incidental to human nature.

In the courſe of this addreſs, I have not, I believe, deviated very far from the important command, which was the baſis of this

diſcourſe. If I have reſerved the cloſe and final application of the text till now; for you it is reſerved, who are the objects of this inſtitution. *Thou ſhalt not ſteal* is a precept, that came directly from GOD, and was confirmed by the mouth of your REDEEMER. — *Thou ſhalt not ſteal:* — I truſt there is not one among you, but trembles at the thought! But, while I hold you incapable of the crime, which is forbidden in my text, I muſt not forget to caution you againſt thoſe vices, which ſeem to lead to the moſt enormous, and are more dangerous, becauſe more generally practiſed. Lying is next to ſtealing, both in its nature and conſequences. Liars and thieves are equally hateful to GOD, and we are aſſured neither *ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Profane ſwearing is an uſeleſs and a dangerous vice, and has commonly the ſame tendency. Bad company is always connected with ſwearing, with lying, and frequently with ſtealing likewiſe. Beware therefore of idle, diſſolute, profane companions! However

ever enticing, however agreeable, I intreat you to avoid them. If you reſpect this advice as you ought, you will find the benefit of it every moment of your life, and in your old age you will recollect it with gratitude and with pleaſure. There need nothing be ſaid, I truſt, to excite your thankfulneſs to your benefactors; the beſt proof you can exhibit of it will be obedience and mild ſubmiſſion to their good intentions, and to thoſe perſons whom they have ſet over you for your good.

My brethren, reaſon, ſelf-intereſt, and moral duty, ſuggeſted ſo many arguments upon the ſubject, that I have almoſt omitted to treat it as an object of religion. But I cannot think of diſmiſſing you without a few words in a religious view.

It is not only to be obedient to the laws of GOD in your own perſons, and to promote them in your own families, that *you are called*; you are *a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood*, whoſe peculiar office and province it is to aſſert and enforce them in

the face of the world. *Thou ſeeſt a thief and conſenteſt unto him, and art partaker with the adulterers*, is the cenſure that will inevitably await you, if you do not now exert yourſelves for the prevention of thoſe crimes. However powerfully humanity may plead, the plea of religion is infinitely more powerful. Humanity tells you, that you reſcue a fellow-creature from ignorance, from idleneſs, from infamy, from wretchedneſs; Religion tells you, that you are an inſtrument in the hands of Providence to reſcue him from ſin, from Satan, from the wrath of GOD, and from a ſtate of reprobation. Humanity tells you, that you make theſe poor creatures happy by wiſdom, and knowledge, and uſeful employment; Religion tells you, that you introduce them to that which is above all knowledge, the knowledge of GOD himſelf. Not only the dictates of humanity, but thoſe of ſelf-intereſt acquire a peculiar force when united with religious motives. Self-intereſt ſuggeſts, that you are benefiting ſociety, and conſequently

quently yourſelf, by the cultivation of arts, commerce and induſtry; that you are protecting your perſon and property from violence and aſſault, by employing and educating thoſe, who would otherwiſe have neither ſubſiſtance nor principle: but Religion tells you, that you are engaged in the ſame work with CHRIST and his apoſtles; and that, in providing for the ſpiritual neceſſities of others, you are caring for your own.

SERMON

SERMON XV.

ON CONSCIENCE.*

MATT. XIV. 1 & 2.

At that time, Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus, and ſaid unto his ſervants, this is John the Baptiſt, he is riſen from the dead.

THAT evil ſhould be productive of good, that Pain and Adverſity ſhould be the handmaids of Virtue, diſplays the wiſdom as well as the mercy of our CREATOR, who has ſubmitted us to this varied ſtate. — Or rather, this diſpenſation ſerves to diminiſh the weight of that curſe, which the diſobedience of the firſt man had entailed upon poſterity.

* Preached at the Magdalen Chapel, Auguſt, 1784.

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Of all the train of moral (I might perhaps add natural) evils, there is none more intolerable, and yet none more ſalutary, than the pain of conſcience. It is the moſt intolerable, becauſe the ſenſation of terror is generally added to that of remorſe; and that, not a tranſient terror, excited by the apprehenſion of a temporary affliction, but a conſtant terror founded on the too certain knowledge and expectation of a puniſhment which is to endure for ever.—But the diſeaſe, if ſeaſonably attended to, points immediately to its remedy. That remorſe, which brings to our recollection ideas fraught with anxiety and dread, points to us the means of happineſs and comfort. The commencement of virtue in the heart of a ſinner is remorſe; repentance follows as its natural ſucceſſor.—Repentance teaches us to hope in the promiſes of GOD,—and by hope we are ſaved.

If, on the other hand, we are inattentive to the admonitions of conſcience, and think by other means to eſcape the perſecution; let

let us remember that from the reproaches of conſcience and the terrors of futurity no ſtation is ſecure. — Conſcience, like death, aſſails the monarch as well as the peaſant. No life ſo buſy, but the ſinner will find occaſions to recollect his guilt and his danger; no life ſo retired as to enable the victim of deſpair to fly from himſelf.

In proof of this obſervation, you have before you, my brethren, the vain, the ſenſual, the ambitious Herod. You have a fatal example, that happineſs is not neceſſarily connected with rank or fortune; — that our vices only are our real tormentors; and that proſperity is commonly no more than the ſpecious betrayer of human life.

In all the luxury of an Eaſtern court, when the conſcience ſhould ſeem to be charmed to reſt by the moſt exquiſite enjoyments, or diverted by the variety of pleaſure, — Herod is wretched. Seated on an hereditary throne, a ſtateſman and a conqueror,—Herod trembles. An obſcure individual, who had only ſignalized himſelf by

by works of mercy and benevolence, diſturbs the conſcience of a king. — But the guilt of murder ſat heavily on his heart. — Murder was the poiſon that rankled in his wounded ſoul. *When Herod heard of the fame of Jeſus, he ſaid, this is John the Baptiſt, he is riſen from the dead.* The ſolution was forced, the apprehenſion was contrary to nature and reaſon. — To riſe from the dead was a miracle of a far more ſtupendous nature than any which JESUS had hitherto performed. Elijah and the prophets had all wrought miracles; and was it not eaſier to ſuppoſe, that another had ſucceeded, endued with ſimilar powers, than that a deaf or blind man could not be cured, or a cripple reſtored to the uſe of his limbs, without one riſing from the dead? and yet Herod exclaims: — *This is John the Baptiſt, — he is riſen from the dead.* But Herod was the murderer of John the Baptiſt; — with John the Baptiſt, therefore, every thought was aſſociated. The bloody ſpectre of the mangled prophet accompanied him in every action.

action.—By John the Baptiſt his ſlumbers were interrupted, by John the Baptiſt his appetite was palled even before he had taſted of the banquet. Every ſtranger that appeared was John the Baptiſt; every rumour that was propagated had ſome relation to this hideous phantom, which inceſſantly haunted his imagination. Dreadful, comfortleſs, diſtracting ſtate! Society is a terror; ſolitude is hell! Every cloak may conceal a traitor. The impatient dagger may tremble in the hand of the enthuſiaſtic diſciple; and Herod *fears the multitude, becauſe they counted John for a prophet.* Go, then, moſt wretched of tyrants, to thy ſecure and ſecret cloſet. Fortify the entrance againſt the intruding rabble. Thy ſtate, alas! requires that thou ſhouldſt be ſecured from thyſelf. Thy enemy, thy perſecutor is thyſelf. The murdered John, behold he haunts thee ſtill! He points to a vengeance far more ample, more ſevere. The multitude! What can the multitude? They may rebel againſt thee, they may diſturb

turb thy government, they may reject its authority. But GOD? he can caſt thee down into the abyſs of hell, and torment thee everlaſtingly.

Obſerve, my brethren, by what inſenſible gradations the heart is vitiated and depraved. Obſerve the neceſſity of attending in time to the admonitions of conſcience. Herod begins with LUST, he ends with MURDER. Born to a throne, with an example of cruelty in the perſon of his father, (the deteſted author of the maſſacre at Bethlehem,) the heedleſs monarch places his only happineſs in the indulgence of his paſſions. We may imagine many progreſſive ſteps before his heart arrived at that callous period, when it was no longer to be ſatisfied with a vulgar crime. His brother's wife is the object of his impure deſires; and yet, while he was ſtill young in vice, *he heard John gladly*. Such is the eloquence of virtue, that even bad men will take pleaſure in its praiſes, while their own foibles and extravagances are not the immediate

mediate objects of cenſure. But, the preacher of repentance could not tacitly behold an act, which put juſtice and even decency to the bluſh. He boldly taxes the tyrant with his crime, and tells him, however lovely and inviting the perſon of Herodias might be, *It is not lawful for thee to have her*. The conſcience of Herod rebuked him more ſeverely than the expoſtulation of the prophet; and, by a miſtaken effort to ſilence this importunate monitor, John is caſt into priſon. The reſource, however, is as ineffectual as the action is unjuſt; while John lives, there is a witneſs and a cenſor of his infamy. Herodias has a conſcience too; and, to relieve her from its reproaches, it is raſhly and impiouſly concluded that John muſt die. The man, who has reſigned the reins to paſſion, who has devoted himſelf to the gratification of his vicious and impure deſires, is no longer under the awe of GOD, or the dominion of conſcience. Reſpect to the laws, ſhame of the world, regard to

his fortune, care of his family, friends, reputation, body and ſoul, are ſacrificed. The prophet falls a victim to the rage and folly of a licentious woman: the baſe and unmanly Herod is made eternally wretched.

Taught by this example, you who dwell in the tents of Tranquillity, whoſe blooming and cheerful companion is Innocence, learn to prize that bleſſing as it deſerves. The abandoned ſinner, who wiſhes to render you as wretched as himſelf, will tell you, you want to know the world.——But in what would he inſtruct you? In miſery, in folly; in what to be ignorant of, is the beſt of knowledge.—— Beware of the firſt advance in ſin. It may ſeem perhaps but a trifling deviation; but whither it may lead you is impoſſible to gueſs. No human being ever became abandoned at once; and petty omiſſions uſually lead to univerſal depravity. It is a queſtion, whether, innocence once loſt, the mind's tranquillity is ever totally reſtored. The converted ſinner

experiences

experiences indeed a ſenſation of happineſs; but it is the "Joy of grief;" it is a penſive pleaſure, mingled with regret. Perfect innocence is the great conſtituent of perfect felicity. The celeſtial ſpirits are happier than we are, becauſe they are better; and GOD is all in all, happineſs ſupreme, becauſe he is infinite in goodneſs. You have a monitor, that will not permit you to go aſtray uninformed of your danger. Conſcience is not only a judge, but an adviſer; as ſuch, reſpect her dictates, and, as you value your own happineſs in this life and that which is to come, never, never wantonly diſregard her.

You, who have indeed deviated into the paths of error, but have not as yet totally bewildered yourſelf in the mazes of depravity: you, who have experienced, and now perhaps experience the ſevere reproaches of an outraged conſcience: conſider them as the voice of GOD, as a divine grace operating within you for the redemption of your ſoul. Your remorſe is

not the agony of a Herod, or the trembling of a Felix; it is the humiliation of David, it is the tear of Peter. Go, then, like that holy apoſtle, and weep for your weakneſs; but let your repentance not finiſh there. As you dread the renewal of your crime, deſtroy completely all the means of temptation. Here, in the awful preſence of your GOD and SAVIOUR, make a ſolemn offering of every darling object, that may again endanger your peace and your ſalvation. Reſolve, with a holy ardour, moſt carefully to avoid thoſe dangerous connexions, thoſe profligate companions, whoſe art, whoſe gaiety, whoſe alluring converſation, may betray you a ſecond time to infamy and ruin.

You, laſt of all, if any ſuch be preſent, who are a veteran in ſin, — tell me, have you found nothing to alarm you in the picture that has been exhibited? Perhaps the voice of conſcience may be weak within you; extinguiſhed I cannot ſuppoſe it, for Herod had a conſcience, and that too in almoſt

moſt the ultimate ſtage of depravity. If, therefore, a ſpark of virtue yet remain; if a ray of goodneſs can yet be found to enlighten you; — retract in time. Conſider to what the warnings of conſcience in general relate. Conſider that her prophetic voice forebodes not evil in this life alone, but in another. Conſider that, if even now your conſcience be lulled into the ſleep of ſenſuality and ſin, it will awake to miſery at one time or other; at a time, perhaps, when to hope for a remedy were abſurd and impoſſible. Let not a fatal ſuggeſtion of your ſpiritual enemy, a ſad ſuſpicion that your caſe is too deſperate for amendment, miſlead you. Whatever your difficulties, ſpiritual and temporal, GOD will not deſert you, if you truly turn to him. Through faith in CHRIST, and obedience to his commandments, a glorious proſpect yet opens to your view. *Though thy ſins be as ſcarlet*, ſays the prophet, *they ſhall be white as ſnow; and, though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Thy

ſorrow, thy contrition ſhall not paſs unrewarded. Thou, *the loſt ſheep, ſhalt cauſe rejoicing even in heaven.*

And you, my young friends: gaiety, perhaps, or the hopes of entertainment, may have invited ſome of you to the moſt edifying of ſpectacles. Come, then, and in the houſe of penitence learn the neceſſity of attending ſedulouſly to the leſſons of conſcience. Let theſe unhappy ſinners tell their tale of woe. Let them tell you what remorſe, what apprehenſions they experienced on their firſt fatal dereliction of virtue. Let them deſcribe the painful conflicts between modeſty and hunger, between honour and poverty, when reduced to the ſhameful neceſſity of general proſtitution. Let them tell you how they wandered deſolate and friendleſs, and wanted perhaps a morſel of bread to ſatisfy the cravings of nature; how they paſſed the wintry night expoſed to all the rigour of the elements; nor even in the *tents of wickedneſs* could find a ſhelter, or *where to lay their*

their heads. Let them tell you the variety of anguiſh they have experienced; the brutal treatment, the inſolent and inhuman injuries, to which they have ſubmitted; the diſeaſe, the penury they have endured; the atrocious and deſperate crimes in which they have been induced to take a part. While your hearts yet melt with the affecting detail: behold the miſerable wreck of beauty and of health; behold the delicacy of youth untimely ſinking under the infirmities of age!

After this, I cannot think it neceſſary to perſuade you liberally to ſupport an inſtitution, which has for its object the reſcuing of a fellow-creature from ſuch accumulated affliction; which has for its object the ſaving of ſo many lives that may be uſeful to the community; which has for its object the reformation of manners and the prevention of vice; which has for its object the reconciling to GOD ſo many ſouls eſtranged from their REDEEMER, and exiſting in the *gall of bitterneſs and the bond of iniquity.* — It is a

ſhocking caſe, when the unhappy victim of imprudence is involved in ſin, without a poſſibility of eſcape; it is a ſhocking caſe, when hunger and cold, poverty and diſgrace force the reluctant penitent to a continuance in ſin, and when the neceſſities of the body impel (as it were) to the ruin of the ſoul. Let the voice of conſcience, my brethren, be the voice of charity. As you are not without ſin yourſelves, learn to have pity on your fellow-criminals. And, in particular, if any ſinner be preſent, who is ſo wretched as to have been acceſſary to the entailing on a deluded female the miſeries of proſtitution, let the voice of conſcience now tell him, that his crime is no common crime; and that, if he beſtowed, at this moment, on this excellent inſtitution, not *the half*, (like the virtuous publican,) but the *whole of his goods*, he would then ſcarcely expiate the blackneſs of his guilt. It is to be lamented that the prejudices or the ſelfiſhneſs of mankind have not afforded to this charity that ſupport, to which,

which, in the eye of reaſon, it is juſtly entitled. Let not the voice of illiberality tell us, that without this houſe of mercy there are other means of relief. It is not in the indiſcriminate maſs of a common workhouſe, that the heart is to be converted, the underſtanding to be enlightened, and habits of profligacy to be changed into habits of order and devotion: ſuch objects as theſe might indeed contribute to the general depravity and corruption of the place, but they could neither be reformed there themſelves, nor would they be out of the way of perverting others. Let it not be ſaid, again, that the good intentions of the charity are not always anſwered. Perhaps not: (and yet I can ſcarcely imagine that a reflecting being, who has experienced the miſeries of a life of proſtitution, ſhould willingly return to them.) But, allowing the poſſibility of this: if but a few are ſaved, or if (as I am inclined to believe) the majority are reſtored to religion, to induſtry, to their diſconſolate parents, the

ſoundeſt

ſoundeſt head and the pureſt heart muſt certainly approve your bounty. Let YOUR generoſity, my brethren, make ſome compenſation for the obduracy of others; and, for this exertion of benevolence, be aſſured that *the bleſſing of her, who was ready to periſh*, will come down upon you; and that *he, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, will reward you ſeven-fold into your own boſoms.*

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

ON TOLERATION.*

LUKE IX. 55, 56.

Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. For, the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them.

WHEN the SUPREME AUTHOR OF NATURE created mankind dependent upon each other, it was a ſufficient intimation of his divine will: *that, as he loved us, ſo ſhould we alſo love one another.* Subject as we are to innumerable wants and infirmities; and expoſed as we are to various dangers and calamities, the ſtrong and prevailing voice of ſelf-intereſt ſolicits us to

* The following diſcourſe was preached at St. Nicholas, Liverpool, June 11, 1780, during the dreadful riots in the metropolis; at a time when there was great reaſon to apprehend the ſame tragedy would be acted in that place.

the

the conſtant exertion of the benevolent affections. In the weak and tender ſtate of infancy, to theſe we are indebted for nurture and ſupport; and, in maturer age, it is from theſe alone that we are to look for ſatisfaction and comfort. Without theſe, this *garden of Eden*, which the LORD has appointed us *to dreſs and to keep*, would become a dreary and diſconſolate waſte; the thorns of diſappointment would overſpread every pleaſant ſpot, nor would it afford one gay flower, one fragant and luxuriant ſhrub, to cheer and entertain the paſſenger in his melancholy way.

" But, has the voice of Nature told me to regard with kind affection the malignant being who loves not me; or to embrace the ruffian, whoſe hand is raiſed to ſhed my blood? Does Nature impel me to love the man, whoſe religious opinions have ſet him at variance with the reſt of his ſpecies; who diſhonours GOD who is the ſupreme object of my adoration, and deſpiſes the laws, which I account both ſacred and divine?" THAT

GOD,

GOD, let us remember, *cauſes his ſun to ſhine and his rain to fall upon the juſt and upon the unjuſt*; THAT GOD has declared, *I will have mercy and not ſacrifice*; THAT GOD *is long-ſuffering, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs.* Who made thee a judge of the ſupreme decrees? Does GOD himſelf endure, and canſt not thou? Miſtake not thy perverſe paſſions for the dictates of virtue, or the breathings of a devout and holy ſpirit. Shall he, that all-merciful and beneficent Maſter, *forgive us ten thouſand talents*, and ſhall not we *forgive our fellow-ſervant one hundred pence?* Shall we receive good things at the hand of GOD; and ſhall we envy our brethren the peaceable poſſeſſion of the ſame? Shall we wreſt judgement out of the hands of Providence, and that on the moſt impious of all pretences, that of being the ſole interpreters of his almighty will, the ſole enlightened, the ſole capable of inſtructing and reforming mankind?

I know of but one argument from Scripture, which appears to afford the lighteſt colour

colour or pretence for religious perſecution; I mean that which is derived from the extirpation of the idolatrous nations by Moſes and Joſhua, and the firſt leaders of the children of Iſrael. Let us not forget, however, that the interpoſition of GOD in favour of the Iſraelites was in every reſpect of a miraculous kind, and cannot poſſibly parallel with any thing in the preſent circumſtances of ſociety. Let us therefore at leaſt have the modeſty to wait for a particular injunction from above, before we preſume to wield the thunders of JEHOVAH; before we aſſume the high office of miniſters of almighty vengeance, and exalt ourſelves into judges of our fellow-creatures.

But, though it were evident, upon the cleareſt principles, that the extirpation of unbelievers was not a particular, but a general appointment under the diſpenſation of Moſes; we are certain that, under that of the Goſpel, nothing can be more repugnant to the order and deſign of Providence. CHRIST himſelf has poſitively aſſured us, that

that he *came not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them:* he has forbidden his diſciples to uſe violence even in their own defence: and, though he remarks, that he *came not to ſend peace on earth, but a ſword*, it is evident that he refers to thoſe perſecutions, which ſhould be raiſed, not by his diſciples, but againſt them. The whole life of our bleſſed LORD was indeed one continued act of mercy, of patience, and of unwearied benevolence. He was *meek and lowly of heart*; he was ever ready to convince and reprove, but never to perſecute. On the contrary, rejected with indignity, and not permitted even to enter a village that lay directly in his way, he is importuned by the intemperate zeal of his diſciples, after the example of Elias, to call down fire from heaven to conſume the rebellious deſpiſers of his miſſion.—But, what was his reply? *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. For, the Son of man is come not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them.*

To

To deſcend to particulars on this occaſion would be an endleſs taſk. The Meſſiah is emphatically ſtyled *the Prince of peace*. We are repeatedly exhorted to *love as brethren: for he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* We are to *follow peace with all men, and above all to have fervent charity one with another*. Not a *charity* which ſuppoſes the end to juſtify the means; not a *charity* which burns the body to ſave the ſoul; not a *charity* which damns yourſelf under the pretence of effecting the ſalvation of another: but a *charity not eaſily provoked*, which *thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things, and in honour preferring one another*. Even when perſonally offended, when provoked by the moſt outrageous inſults that human malignancy can invent, the ſame authority enjoins us to receive it, as the viſitation of GOD, with ſufferance and tranquillity. Revenge is indeed a paſſion falſe in its principles, and the aſſociate only of little, uncultivated minds.

minds. To feel for our fellow-creatures is the great and diſtinguiſhing, the moſt honourable characteriſtic of man's nature; and, why we ſhould not pity them for one infirmity, as well as another, I ſee no juſt reaſon that can be aſſigned. *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!* was the compaſſionate prayer of the moſt benevolent, the moſt patient, and yet the moſt dignified of characters: and, if we alſo conſidered, that frequently, when men are guilty of actual errors and offences, *they know not what they do*, we ſhould rather endeavour to convince them by reaſon than to irritate them by violence.

To *forgive our enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us*, is a refinement in morals unknown to the heathen world; and yet experience teaches us, that it is not a refinement above human power, ſince it has been exemplified not only in our LORD himſelf, but in his immediate diſciples; — moſt of them, at their laſt hour, recommending to

the mercy of GOD their inhuman murderers, and fervently exclaiming, *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.*

If ſuch, therefore, be the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, I think I need not be apprehenſive of cenſure, when I pronounce, that no power, no pretence whatever, can authorize perſecution; and indeed I have but little doubt that it will be found not leſs abſurd than unjuſt. To think freely is the univerſal privilege of human nature. That noble principle, the ſoul, is endued with ſuch a portion of liberty, that the moſt potent of tyrants is unable to hold it in fetters. You may make a man a hypocrite and a liar, but you cannot by force make him a real convert. Love, charity, good actions, good examples, are the means to win the hearts of men. I have heard of falſe religions propagated by violence, but never yet knew that the caſe with the true one. The religion of CHRIST, by its native excellence, and by the aſſiſtance of Providence alone, made its way in the face of

of every earthly impediment. Our glorious reformation, againſt all the power and efforts of the church of Rome, forced conviction on the minds of men, and had made conſiderable progreſs before it derived the ſmalleſt aſſiſtance from any civil power whatever. It is indeed the nature of truth to be ever victorious in the end. Sophiſtry or ſuperſtition may endure for a day; but, like the inſects of ſummer, no ſooner is the warm beam of temporal power withdrawn, than they die away of themſelves, and *their memory is forgotten.*

If ever coolneſs and temperance be required, it is in religious controverſy. If we be ſo eaſily miſled by paſſion, and if the object be of ſo great importance, how much does it behove us to guard with the utmoſt vigilance our hearts? Enthuſiaſm is a flame ſoon lighted, but not eaſily extinguiſhed. It confuſes the judgement, it is almoſt certain to betray us into error. The worſt is, it is a madneſs of which men are not always conſcious; but there is one

ſymptom, which is infallible, and that is want of charity. Whoever experiences this, in the ſlighteſt degree, has great occaſion to be apprehenſive of the conſequences; and, depend upon it, if this fever of the mind be not repelled in time, a delirium is not far remote. We may call our fury zeal, we may brand the contrary temper with the name of lukewarmneſs; but, be not deceived; where there is no charity, there is no Chriſtianity.

Till almighty wiſdom ſhall otherwiſe diſpoſe the affairs of this world, I fear there is as little probability that men ſhould become uniform in their religious ſentiments as that they ſhould all ſpeak the ſame language. But, if we differ not in eſſentials, if only ſome doctrine obſcure in itſelf, and likely to remain ſo, if ſome petty ceremony, ſome unavailing rite, be the ground of diſſent; how unbecoming, how abſurd to carry with us our religious opinions upon every occaſion, as weapons with which to aſſault each other? Let us rather addreſs the

the Deity *each in his own language*, nor any one officiouſly intrude upon the well-meant piety of his neighbour. I ſay *well-meant*, becauſe, though there may be hypocrites in every church, the better part (in number, as well as in principle) really mean to ſerve GOD, and do it in the beſt manner they are capable.

But ſuppoſing, after all, that the difference is not in forms, but in eſſentials; ſuppoſing our brethren in the wrong, which is the way to reclaim them? By arms or by arguments? Ignorance in fact is generally the true parent of perſecution. Men will ſeldom be at the pains to inform themſelves of the principles of religion, and, when they have adopted a ſet of opinions, without at all inveſtigating their nature or harmony, they perſuade themſelves it is their duty to force them on the reſt of mankind: ſo much eaſier is it to wield the weapons of violence than thoſe of truth and reaſon. You cannot poſſibly, however, awe men into belief; by cruelty and

rancour you will rather confirm their prejudices, for they are naturally attached to thoſe things that coſt them deareſt. Again, ſuppoſe the falſe religion, which you attack in this manner, equally or more powerful in another part of the world, with how much greater advantage will ſhe employ thoſe weapons againſt the truth, which you have condeſcended to make uſe of in its favour? Is this religion intolerant, of a ſavage and perſecuting ſpirit? — In what do you differ from thoſe who profeſs it, if you adopt its maxims? You may call yourſelf by what name you pleaſe, but you are of the ſame religion if you act upon the ſame principles.

We ſee, then, the nature and neceſſity of Charity. She is the handmaid of philoſophy and right reaſon, and eſſential to both; ſhe is the offspring of true religion, and inſeparable from it. This diſcourſe, my brethren, is not meant to make you leſs zealous members of that *form of ſound doctrine* which you profeſs: its deſign is to make

make you real members of the communion of our Engliſh church, firm but moderate, charitable though ſincere.

A zeal for the intereſts of piety and virtue in general, is very different from the ZEAL OF PARTY. Too much of a certain ſpecies of liberality, or rather of indifference for religion, ſeems at preſent to pervade all, and particularly the ſuperior ranks of ſociety; but, ſuch is the perverſeneſs of human nature, that even this indifference has not been able to eradicate thoſe malevolent prejudices which have been the blemiſh of better times. If any of you are inclined to reſent the neglect of your religion; if any of you feel a noble emulation to diſtinguiſh yourſelves in the ſervice of your GOD, recollect, that there is a glorious field, in which your virtues may freely expatiate. Vice, profligacy, and diſſipation, are more dangerous, more inveterate enemies to your GOD and SAVIOUR, than all the united powers of Popery, of Mahometaniſm, of Atheiſm itſelf. There is one

mode in which you may ſafely, and in my opinion moſt ſucceſsfully, oppoſe the enemies of your faith; and that is, by ſhewing your zeal in your adherence to the precepts and the principles of your religion, by ſhewing yourſelves better men, better citizens, better Chriſtians, than thoſe whom you oppoſe; theſe were the ſpiritual weapons with which CHRIST and his apoſtles fought and overcame; this is a warfare the effects of which will be permanent and certain; which, while it eſſentially ſerves the cauſe you are engaged in, will ſtill more effectually ſerve yourſelves. Here there is no poſſibility of miſtake, here is no room for cavil or diſpute; and remember, that ſyſtem of faith, the effects of which are moſt conſpicuous in reforming the lives of its diſciples, in producing righteouſneſs, temperance, ſobriety, induſtry, and regularity of life, will ever have the advantage over all its adverſaries, and muſt be victorious in the end.

I am,

I am, however, far from aſſerting, that the forms of religion are deſtitute of influence on the moral conduct of men. I am far from wiſhing to apologize for the errors of the Roman Catholic perſuaſion. There are ſome of its tenets abſurd and unſupported by Scripture, ſome of them dangerous to the common rights of mankind; I will add, that ſome of thoſe tenets, which it formerly profeſſed, I believe its more enlightened members are now heartily aſhamed of. It is doubtleſs for the intereſts of mankind that its progreſs ſhould be reſiſted. — But how is it to be reſiſted? not by the fire-brands of popular fury. Not by that ſeverity, that intolerant ſpirit, which we ſo juſtly blame in them! Let us, I intreat you, not raſhly condemn, before we have inveſtigated the ſubject; nor, through fear of a ſhadow, commit real injuſtice. Let us, in the firſt place, have undoubted evidence of the increaſe of Popery; let us accurately compare the proſelytes they have made, with the members they

they have loſt; and then let us apply in a decent and an orderly manner to our legiſlature, like men, and like Chriſtians.

Civil violence is the moſt dreadful of all expedients. It rarely atchieves its end; and in itſelf it includes every evil to be dreaded in the very worſt ſtate of ſociety. The diſeaſe, therefore, muſt be very deſperate indeed, when men of any degree of prudence will have recourſe to ſuch a remedy. Raſhneſs has one never-failing attendant, and that is remorſe. Unleſs with reaſon and temper you undertake alterations, you may deſtroy what you mean to improve. Seated upon the ruins of that moſt excellent fabric, THE CONSTITUTION, you may hereafter deplore what you then will not be able to remedy. You may exclaim with the prophet: *Who ſhall have pity on thee, O Jeruſalem? or who ſhall bemoan thee? or who ſhall go aſide to aſk how thou doſt? Even thy brethren, and the houſe of thy father have dealt treacherouſly with thee: yea, they have called a multitude after thee. Many paſtors*

tors have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs. Study, therefore, my brethren, rather to make yourſelves good and practical Chriſtians, than zealous diſputants or polemics: and let the imbecillity of the human faculties be a further argument. — You think yourſelf in the right: but remember, he whom you condemn thinks himſelf right as well as you. Speculative errors we have the utmoſt reaſon to believe will meet with ample indulgence; but a neglect of the duties of a Chriſtian will not be overlooked. "The things to "be done are many, the things to be be-"lieved are few:" and of ſo little value, in the ſight of GOD, are thoſe opinions which have too frequently ſet the world in flames, that the queſtions at the laſt great day will all reſpect our actions, and none of them our particular tenets or ſyſtems of belief. *When I was naked, did you clothe me? When I was hungry, did you give me meat? When I was ſick and in priſon, did you viſit*

viſit me? When I was a ſtranger, did you take me in? Whoever can anſwer then with confidence at the judgement-ſeat of CHRIST, in whatever ſect or party, education, weakneſs, prejudice may have enrolled him, need not deſpair of acceptance and ſalvation at the throne of Grace. *To obey is better than ſacrifice; and why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?*

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

ON THE LAWFULNESS AND EXPEDIENCY OF INOCULATION FOR THE SMALL-POX.*

MARK III. 4.

Is it lawful to do good on the ſabbath-days, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill?

THIS very rational reproof, extorted from our bleſſed Saviour by the bigotry of his countrymen in a particular inſtance, may not improperly be applied to all thoſe, whoſe falſe notions of religion would extend its influence beyond its pro-

* The following ſermon was preached at St. Nicolas' church, in Liverpool, on the 17th of March, 1782, at the requeſt of the magiſtrate, who, by the deſire of the faculty, had undertaken to patronize a plan for the general inoculation of the poor. The ſermon was afterwards publiſhed, and is, I believe, to be had, with a letter from the author of "Domeſtic Medicine" annexed, at Law's, in Ave-Maria Lane, price 6d.

per

per juriſdiction; who would condemn, without conſideration, actions in themſelves indifferent, nay in a moral view laudable; who would make a crime of ſelf-preſervation. The words, I have juſt now cited, point out, in my opinion, the only ſafe mode of judging where there is no expreſs prohibition, and human reaſon is left to decide: —— *Is it lawful to do good, or to do evil? To ſave life, or to kill?*

We are of neceſſity very ignorant in what concerns the divine government of the world. We can have but a very partial view of the deſigns of Omnipotence. The contemplation involves a chain of cauſes too great, too many, and too far extended for our comprehenſion, were it even poſſible for us to approach the ſources of this knowledge. We have indeed a general view of the greatneſs of the wiſdom and power of the ALMIGHTY. We ſee that *he hangeth the earth upon nothing; that he bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; that he ſaith to the ſnow, be thou on the earth, likewiſe*

wiſe to the ſmall rain, and to the great rain of his ſtrength; that he bringeth low and lifteth up; he killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. Human preſumption, in ſpeculating too nicely on this ſubject, has been the moſt fertile ſource that ever ſupplied miſguided zeal with ſophiſtry to perplex the common ſenſe of mankind. Men make a Providence of their own, and, on the ſame plan, conſciences of their own; at theſe unjuſt tribunals, and by this falſe criterion, muſt every truth be tried; no wonder, if the deciſions are often arbitrary, in contradiction to reaſon, experience, nay, the voice of Scripture itſelf. Two erroneous concluſions of this kind, it is proper to notice: firſt, —— "Becauſe the CREATOR has appointed the courſe of nature in all things for the beſt," it has been ſuggeſted, "that his ordinances are ſinfully invaded by the inventions of men." Not unlike to this, and little removed from the gloomy doctrine of PREDESTINATION, is the notion, "that, ſince the

the care of the divine Providence is over all his works, ſince we are enjoined to *put our truſt in God*, we are therefore to place no dependance upon human means, and little or no endeavours are expected on our part." Both theſe errors I ſhall attempt to examine, and, by the ſame tenor of argument, both may be replied to.

The order of Providence ſurely cannot be invaded, while a creature acts up to the ends of his nature. Through the different ranks of being we diſcern ſomething like a gradual aſcent from inanimate matter, conſtrained by uniform and certain laws, to that freedom and ſpontaneity of action, which diſtinguiſhes the thinking part of the creation. The moon and ſtars obſerve their ſtated periods. *He hath ſet a tabernacle for the ſun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a ſtrong man to run a race.* Returning ſpring revives the verdure of the fields; and, confined to the exertion of a few faculties, and thoſe directly ſerving to the continuation

tion of the ſpecies, animal nature exiſts without variety or change of ſentiment, without foreſight or reflection. But man has been in a much higher degree the object of his CREATOR's bounty. The rude, inactive clod, of which he was formed, was ennobled, by *breathing into his noſtrils the breath of life.* He is not, like the vegetable kingdom, riveted to a ſpot of earth, and ſubjected to a proceſs almoſt mechanical, from the commencement to the termination of his exiſtence. He is elevated far above the inſtinctive propenſities of the beaſts of the field. He is made capable of a variety of intellectual enjoyments. He is appointed, in a great meaſure, the diſpoſer of his own conduct; poſſeſſed of a portion of the divine liberty, and enlightened by a ray of the divine wiſdom to guide and direct him. Theſe powers in the latter are as much the ordinance of Providence, as the laws of matter in the former. If GOD had not intended we ſhould uſe theſe powers, he would not have imparted them to us; in

whatever caſes they were liable to be abuſed, he would have warned us, either by ſpeaking to our underſtandings in his holy Scriptures, or no leſs forcibly to our outward ſenſes by the natural and apparent conſequences.

That the care of the ALMIGHTY *is over all his works*, will not admit of diſpute. We are taught *to put our whole truſt and confidence in God.* And it muſt be confeſſed, we meet with ſuch precepts in Scripture, as —— *Be careful for nothing; take no thought for the morrow, neither for your life, what ye ſhall eat, nor what ye ſhall drink, neither for the body, what ye ſhall put on.* We are aſſured, *that the hairs of our head are all numbered*; — *That not a ſparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father.* But, who does not ſee, that theſe expreſſions are to be underſtood with ſome limitation? To encourage indolence or preſumptive hope, could never be the deſign of him, who imparted to us theſe faculties, certainly with an intent that they ſhould be made

uſe

uſe of. The words I have quoted can be meant only to encourage a reaſonable truſt and dependance on the Supreme Being; ſome of them perhaps applicable chiefly to the firſt profeſſors of the Goſpel, who might expect even miraculous aſſiſtance, when the cauſe they were engaged in demanded it, and in whom an attention to the little cares of this life would have been an obſtruction to their great work, the converſion of a world.

The preſent life is a compound of evil and good. We are enjoined to avoid the one and purſue the other; which injunctions would be abſurd, were not ſome endeavours expected on our own part. What was man's condition in a ſtate of innocence we are in a great meaſure ignorant; of this we are certain, that a degree of evil is very properly connected with the ſtate of probation we are now placed in: it reduces our pride; it inſtructs us in patience; it leſſens the love of life, which would otherwiſe be immoderate; it, in fine, exerciſes our faculties,

ties, and calls forth to action all the human powers. Man thus ſurrounded with evil and good, if the fruits of the earth invite his taſte, it requires an effort to gratify his appetite, and no leſs to avoid a precipice or fly from the ſerpent's bite. Unleſs the actions of man be ſuppoſed to flow from the determination of his own will, he cannot be looked upon as that accountable being, who is to be anſwerable for all his doings, *whether they be good, or whether they be evil.* That portion of freedom, which is proper for man in what reſpects the moral world, we ſee actually exerciſed by him in what reſpects the natural world. Nor is he frequently accuſed of counteracting Providence, while he makes univerſal nature ſubſervient to his pleaſure and caprice. If GOD's general providence, and what are called *the laws of nature* be the ſame, then ſurely the decrees of Providence are continually violated by the inventions of men. The uſe of cloathing, and the laboured preparations of food, the arts of navigation,

navigation, of manufactures, and the whole ſcience of medicine, are apparently taking things out of the hand of GOD, and diſpoſing them in an order contrary to that, in which nature has arranged them. The truth is, man was originally formed for invention and action. — *The Lord placed the man in the midſt of the garden, to dreſs and to keep it.* The circumſtances attending his fall ſeem to have rendered theſe exertions ſtill more neceſſary.

To apply theſe principles more immediately to the matter under our preſent conſideration. A moſt effectual preſervative has been diſcovered from the fatal effects of an alarming diſeaſe; but the too tender conſciences of a few ſuperſtitious perſons interpoſe to rob them of its benefits. "We tempt GOD," ſay they, "by voluntarily bringing on a diſeaſe which we might poſſibly have eſcaped; we throw ourſelves in the way of danger; we diſtruſt the providence of ALMIGHTY GOD, who is all-ſufficient to deliver us." Theſe words have

deed the appearance and the voice of piety, but they have nothing elſe. There are few of the actions of life, to which the objection might not more or leſs apply. In what has the GOD of nature more apparently ſet a limit to the aſpiring genius of man, than by circumſcribing him with the ocean, as with a fence, which to paſs muſt ever be an undertaking of much hazard and difficulty? With what plauſibility might it be alleged, that Providence has aſſigned to each order of beings its proper element, and which therefore it muſt be impiety to deſert? Fiſhes, they might add, do not preſume to traverſe the land, or contend for the empire of the ſky. Tell me, does he not tempt GOD, who leaves the bleſſings of his native ſoil, expoſes himſelf to the fury of tempeſts, to the war of elements, to the rigour of climates, where every breath of air is charged with peſtilence and deſtruction? Yet the man would be deſervedly ridiculed, who on theſe grounds would condemn the uſes of commerce. Cuſtom has worn

worn off whatever was offenſive in the action, has reconciled us to what, no doubt, would be at firſt eſteemed a violation of nature's law; and the benefit it extends to the community at large is an argument on which we may ſafely ground the belief, that it is not contrary to the will of GOD. To multiply inſtances would be tedious. An apprehended mortification, which yet by ſome chance may not take place, renders it prudent that I ſhould loſe a limb: this, without conſidering the hazard of life, is in itſelf a loſs, a mutilation of our Maker's image, is attended with inſufferable pain. By the very operation I loſe my life, which perchance I might not have loſt but for my over-caution. This is a caſe that may happen; yet no man in his ſenſes will diſpute, that the practice of amputation is ſalutary on the whole, and that for one loſt by ſuch operations, at leaſt twenty lives are preſerved to the community. You apprehend a diſeaſe coming upon you, and you take a medicine by way of prevention,

from which you can foreſee no ill effects; yet this very medicine, unſeaſonably applied, may be the ſole occaſion of an untimely death. This may happen from the ſimpleſt medicines, or even from an alteration in our manner of living, from the uſe of the bath, or from exerciſe improperly taken; yet certainly to diſuſe theſe remedies altogether would be indiſcretion, if not madneſs. If, when means are offered, we indolently ſit ſtill, and only call on Providence, without an inclination to help ourſelves, we ſhall find our impiety, I may ſafely call it, deſervedly its own puniſhment. Like the viſionary, who expects a miracle to ſnatch him from beneath the tottering fabric, or looks for a ſuſpenſion of the laws of gravitation, we ſhall fall the unpitied victims of our own ſuperſtition.* And, though the means, we make uſe of to avoid evil, ſhould not in every caſe ſucceed,

* "When the looſe mountain trembles from on high,
"Shall gravitation ceaſe if you go by?"
ESSAY ON MAN.

yet,

yet, where the chances are manifeſtly in our favour, common ſenſe points out, that ſuch method ought to be purſued.

The deaths by the natural ſmall-pox are generally allowed to be in the proportion of *one* in *ſix*, in *ſeven* at the very leaſt, but oftener *one* in *five*. Now, I ſuppoſe, it will be thought moderate, if I ſay, that not above *one* in *forty* eſcape having the diſtemper during the courſe of their lives. Obſerve then, in the firſt place, there are *thirty-nine* to *one* againſt your eſcaping the infection; and then you have only *five* chances to *one* in your favour, that you eſcape with your life. The whole chances therefore in your favour are but FIVE and ONE FORTIETH, or SIX at moſt; whereas, by authentic accounts of the late general inoculation in this town, it appeared that out of FOUR HUNDRED and SIXTEEN only ONE died.* On other occaſions, the proportion

* It has been intimated to the author, that there appears, by the pariſh-regiſters, a ſenſible decreaſe in infant-burials for the laſt half-year.

has

has been found to be *one* in *five hundred*. A riſk ſcarcely to be accounted ſuch, when we conſider what different conſtitutions muſt exiſt among ſuch a number of patients, and the ſtrong probability of the death of full that number, among ſo many infants, from other diſorders, if inoculation had been entirely out of the queſtion.

The whole force of the objection, I am now combating, will be found to reſt on the poſſibility of the perſon's eſcaping the diſeaſe, if left to himſelf: this I have ſhewn to be forty to one againſt him. And, after all, it is a circumſtance, in my mind, hardly to be wiſhed: ſuch a life muſt be a life of terror and anxiety, it may cauſe the neglect of the moſt important concerns, and many an hour muſt be imbittered by the dread of ſo fatal a diſeaſe. Nor are ſuch apprehenſions ill-founded, when we reflect that, though he eſcape for the preſent, the ſecurity is but very frail that he will always eſcape; it may ſeize him in maturer age, when experience convinces us

us that the danger is almoſt double; it may ſeize him at a time, when he is totally unprepared for it; at a time, when he wants the care and attention of a parent's eye; among ſtrangers, or in indigence. He may be cut off in the flower of his life, with perhaps an infant family, depending on him for ſupport. Shall we call it tenderneſs, ſhall we call it juſtice in a parent, that reſerves a darling child for ſuch hazards as theſe?

After all, an ill-judged fondneſs is predominant, and this part of the objection is hardly to be ſurmounted. "Granting the danger of inoculation to be, as it muſt be confeſſed it is, very trifling indeed,—What if, notwithſtanding, out of this five hundred, or whatever number, I am to be the unfortunate perſon? How ſhall I anſwer it to myſelf, if my child ſhould die?" But, how will you anſwer it to yourſelf, if, rejecting this opportunity, it ſhould be ſeized with the diſtemper in the natural way, and (which you will remember is juſt *one hundred times*

times more probable) DIE? "But, that will happen by the hand of GOD." How do you preſume to charge the fault on GOD, when it was in your power to have preſerved it? Perhaps you would juſt ſay the ſame thing, if it had died of a fever, and you had neglected to adminiſter the ordinary remedies. In theſe caſes it is our duty to do what appears moſt reaſonable, on eſtimating the chances both for and againſt us; we may then ſafely, *having done all that was required of us*, commit the event to Providence. If he think fit, out of ſo large a number, to make me, or my child a particular exception to the general courſe of his mercy, it is my part to conclude that infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs did not act without an end: *It is good for me* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *that I have been in trouble*; and *I know that thou, out of very faithfulneſs, haſt cauſed me to be afflicted.* Perhaps it may leſſen the regret, in an unfortunate event of this kind, to know, that there is a probability, that the patient, who dies under inoculation,

inoculation, would not have ſurvived the diſtemper in the natural way. Nay, poſſibly, the fatally-diſpoſing cauſe might exiſt in the conſtitution even till a remote period, and the whole chance of eſcape depend on that very improbable one, never taking the infection at all.

Humanity and parental tenderneſs would perhaps dictate another argument on this occaſion. It is not only, that the hazard is ſo aſtoniſhingly leſs, but the perſon inoculated is exempted from much bodily ſuffering. Whoever has had an opportunity of ſeeing ſome miſerable objects under the oppreſſion of this diſeaſe, will eaſily feel the force of this motive. The little trouble and expence will, perhaps, make ſomething in the ſcale of argument. Obſerve the family, of which any branch is affected with the natural ſmall-pox; obſerve the anxiety and confuſion, the fear and diſtreſs on every turn of the diſtemper: compare this with the cheerfulneſs, the compoſure of the family, nay of the patient himſelf,

whilſt

whilſt under inoculation; he ſcarcely ſuffers either pain or ſickneſs, buſineſs is not interrupted, nor is he by any means debarred the enjoyment of pleaſure.

In few words, GOD gave us reaſon and invention, to enable us, under him, to be benefactors to ourſelves, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, as well as to others. On any point, which is left undecided by revelation, we can only judge of its conformity to the will of GOD, by the general ſucceſs: what is plainly proved on the whole to be for the good of mankind, can never be contrary to the divine will. *Is it lawful to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill?* We know, that there is nothing in Scripture, which even remotely tends to diſcountenance our making uſe of any method ſimilar to inoculation, provided it be done for ſelf-preſervation. *Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth,* was one of the firſt commands of GOD; inſtead, therefore, of looking upon it as a violation of the law of Providence, I eſteem the diſcovery

very as no leſs than a communication from the merciful Author of our being, for the benefit of his creatures. And I can call it by no other name, than a criminal infatuation, a moſt pertinacious obſtinacy, which determines to oppoſe a practice warranted by ſo many ſucceſsful trials; a practice ſubmitted to by almoſt EVERY CROWNED HEAD IN CHRISTENDOM and by EVERY PERSON of RANK in this kingdom; a practice univerſally approved by the learned, and diſcommended by no perſon, who has a right underſtanding of religion.

I have heard of other objections, not indeed religious, but which, nevertheleſs, deſerve conſideration. It has been ſaid, that inoculation, more frequently than the natural ſmall-pox, leaves other diſtempers behind it. The aſſertion is a direct abſurdity in theory as well as experience. It might be alleged with almoſt equal reaſon, that a ſlight cold is attended with worſe conſequences to the conſtitution than the violence of a fever. Whatever racks and diſorders

diſorders moſt the human frame, muſt weaken moſt the ſyſtem, muſt leave the worſt effects, and diſpoſe it moſt to the attacks of diſeaſe. General experience ſupports this aſſertion, and juſtifies a concluſion directly oppoſite to the objection. —— DEFORMITY of FEATURE, LOSS of EYE-SIGHT, GENERAL INFIRMITY, and A TRAIN of NERVOUS DISORDERS are the common conſequences of the natural ſmall-pox. Look among thoſe, on the other hand, who have been inoculated, and you will not, I will venture to affirm, find *one* in *fifty*, who have ſuffered any, the leaſt, conſequential inconvenience. Similar to this, and not leſs formidable, is a common objection, "that other diſeaſes may be ingrafted by inoculation." In anſwer, I beg leave to obſerve, firſt, That the poſſibility of the thing has been poſitively denied by ſome phyſicians of the greateſt eminence. Secondly, That, admitting the poſſibility, the diſeaſes, which could be ſo communicated, are ſo few, that there is little

little danger on that account: I do not recollect above two diſeaſes in this country, that could be ſo taken. Thirdly, It is a queſtion, whether, if this be poſſible in inoculation, there be not equal danger when the infection is caught in the natural way.* Fourthly, It is at the worſt an objection, as yet, only in theory, for I know of no well-authenticated inſtance to countenance the ſuppoſition. And laſtly, the well-known caution of the faculty in this reſpect, notwithſtanding the great improbability, is ſufficient to obviate every fear. As to what has been ſometimes ſaid of the poſſibility of receiving the infection a ſecond time, it having been contradicted by ſo many actual experiments, I eſteem it altogether unworthy of notice; and ſhall,

* If the opinion of ſome of the faculty be true, that the diſeaſe can only be communicated by actual contact, the force of this obſervation will be eaſily ſeen. In ſhort, equal or greater danger ſeems to accompany many of the common actions of life, ſuch as drinking out of the ſame cup, &c.

therefore, content myſelf, on the beſt authorities, with flatly denying the fact.

Wicked and malicious men are ſeldom at a loſs for a ſlander to leſſen or obſcure the merit of the moſt benevolent undertakings; and, it is to be lamented, that the paſſions of the multitude are in this reſpect but too eaſily impoſed on. There never yet was a charitable inſtitution for the preſervation of the health of the poor, to which bad men were not ready to object, "that the chief purpoſe was (as they term it) to enable the medical profeſſion to make experiments." Give me leave to caution you againſt ſuch inſinuations, and to aſſure you, they are not your friends, who ſuggeſt them. Were there men of that profeſſion wicked enough to encourage ſuch an idea, (which I hope there are not,) yet it would be almoſt impoſſible to put it in execution. They are, not only under the jealous inſpection of one another, but generally under that of other men of public ſpirit and humanity; and their deareſt reputation

putation and intereſts depend upon their conduct. In the preſent inſtance, it is out of the queſtion to make new trials. The round of treatment has been ſo long eſtabliſhed, and ſo very ſucceſsful, as to require, almoſt to admit, no improvement; and is withal ſo ſimple, that in moſt caſes it might be practiſed by any uninformed perſon without incurring danger.* The plan now in agitation for the inoculation of the poor, has, I think I may venture to ſay, met with the approbation of every humane, and every rational perſon; it has been ſpiritedly entered into by the medical profeſſion in this town, who, barely to do them juſtice, have in no part of the world been outdone in diſintereſted virtue, charity, and activity in the public ſervice.

* A private gentleman in Liverpool, without any medical knowledge, ſucceſsfully inoculated all his own children; and I knew a clergyman in Scotland, who, I was told, inoculated a conſiderable number of his pariſhioners, all without any previous preparation, and all with the moſt happy effects.

To conclude. — Let me intreat, that you, who are parents, will afford theſe arguments mature and candid conſideration. If they appear concluſive, it is unneceſſary to tell you what it will be your duty to do. I pity the infatuated parent, who may ſtill retain a ſuperſtitious fear; but in him, who is REALLY CONVINCED, neglect of this opportunity will be a crime of the blackeſt dye. Should his child be ſeized with the infection and periſh, while, through INDOLENCE, INDIFFERENCE, or any WORSE MOTIVE, he has omitted to attempt its preſervation, what can we deem it ſhort of DELIBERATE MURDER?* A harſh word, but I appeal to the tender parent to juſtify the expreſſion. There is no need to tell you the curſe that awaits on ſuch a con-

* I fear too many inſtances might be produced of the indifference of parents to the ſafety and welfare of their offspring, not only in this, but in other reſpects; it is to ſuch unnatural parents this ſevere reproof is addreſſed; the author means not to wound the feelings of the timid or the weak, but to awake, if poſſible, a ſenſe of duty in the careleſs and unfeeling.

duct.

duct. Even in this life you may feel its effects. *Children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and a gift that cometh of the Lord.* You may loſe the comfort and ſupport of your latter years. You do an injury to your country. You tranſgreſs the ordinances of your Maker, who has enjoined that every gift, which he has imparted to us, ſhould be made uſe of for our own preſervation, and that of our helpleſs infant deſcendants. With this exhortation, therefore, I diſmiſs the ſubject; only requeſting you to bear in mind, that by omitting to inoculate, you leave your child at the riſk of only SIX chances to ONE at the very moſt; whereas, on inoculation, the chances in his favour, by the moſt rigorous calculation, are at leaſt FOUR HUNDRED.

An EXHORTATION,

Delivered occaſionally, on SATURDAY, at the LIVERPOOL INFIRMARY.*

TO-morrow being the Lord's day, when my public duties will render it impoſſible for me to attend you here, as uſual; I have choſen this opportunity to addreſs to you a few words, explaining the purpoſe of our aſſembling here every day, and the nature of that worſhip, which I fear is too often performed without a real ſenſe of its neceſſity and importance.

Moſt of you here preſent have lately felt, or do at this moment feel, the afflicting

* This Exhortation was printed and diſtributed to the patients by the governors of that charity. It is reprinted in this volume merely on the conſideration, that it might poſſibly prove of ſervice on ſome ſimilar occaſion: ſhould the governors or chaplains, therefore, of any public hoſpital be of that opinion, they have the author's full permiſſion to make what uſe of it they pleaſe.

hand of Providence; but you are not to conſider this as the vengeance of an angry GOD: nothing could be ſo contrary to his nature, who is all goodneſs, and deſigns every thing for our good. Some of the misfortunes, under which you now labour, may probably be the effects of your ſins, and wholeſome chaſtiſements intended to bring back your wandering thoughts and affections to the path of grace and virtue; or they may be trials of your patience, and perhaps intended to keep up a proper ſenſe of your dependance upon the ALMIGHTY, which in the hour of proſperity we are but too apt to forget.

Either way, you are to believe them meant for your good, and it depends only on yourſelves to turn them to more profit than all *that the world can beſtow*; ſince, if made a proper uſe of, they may inſure your eternal ſalvation.

To this end, there is one firſt and indiſpenſibly neceſſary ſtep; that is, reforming your paſt errors, reſolving to lead a new life

life of virtue, honeſty, religion: theſe you muſt prize above ſenſual enjoyments or the poſſeſſion of wealth, remembering that AN ETERNITY OF HAPPINESS OR MISERY LIES BEFORE YOU! It will be well, therefore, here, in the awful preſence of ALMIGHTY GOD, to make a ſolemn reſolution, that, if it ſhall be his good pleaſure to reſtore you to your former health, you will hereafter carefully abſtain from all thoſe actions, which are diſpleaſing to him, and which he has prohibited by his expreſs commands; from drunkenneſs and bad company, which laſt is indeed generally the root of all evil; from immorality and profaneneſs of every kind, particularly from that odious and leaſt profitable of vices, *common ſwearing*; and no leſs from *lewd* and *indecent* language; from anger and tumultuous paſſions; from envy and covetouſneſs; from adultery, lewdneſs, and fornication; and more eſpecially, becauſe theſe tend to a life of univerſal debauchery, and moſt certainly lead on to theft, murder, and every crime,

crime, *the end of which things is death:* — Death often in this world, by the juſt ſentence of the law, and, what is more to be dreaded, an eternal death in another. Above all, honeſty and juſtice muſt be ever preſent in your thoughts. You are not to injure another in word or in deed; but, *whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, ſo do unto them; for, this is the law and the prophets.*

Theſe are the firſt outlines of a religious life. There is no difficulty in reducing them to practice; and, without them, there is no gaining pardon or acceptance with GOD.

That you may want no incitement to religion and virtue, the charitable inſtitution, which has provided ſo liberally for the health of your bodies, has ordered divine ſervice to be performed here every day. Now I muſt obſerve to you, that, although worſhip is ſuch a duty as is naturally owing to him, who is the diſpenſer of every good thing we enjoy, and in whoſe hand is either

happineſs

happineſs or miſery, yet prayer has another end, namely, *our own inſtruction*, and to maintain in us a proper ſenſe of morality and juſtice: and it is certain, *that worſhip only*, which brings improvement to our own hearts, which tends to make us good men, and the effects of which are ſeen in our practice, is enjoined by GOD, or can be approved by HIM.

It behoves you, therefore, while preſent at the reading of prayers, to have your minds intent on the great buſineſs you are then engaged in, to weigh every ſentence: for, every ſentence has a meaning.—When you confeſs your ſins, you are not repeating a vague, unmeaning form of words, your heart, your ſoul, every nerve muſt feel.—You are ſpeaking to him, who already knows your thoughts, and you only now make confeſſion of your faults to ſhew that you are ſenſible of them. It is not a general acknowledgement of the weakneſs of your nature that will ſerve, "That you have left undone thoſe things which you ought

ought to have done, &c."—At that moment *every ſecret crime, every guilty action* you have ever been concerned in, muſt ſtare you in the face, and upbraid you with diſobedience. You muſt, as I before intimated, when you pray to the ALMIGHTY for his aſſiſtance to enable you to lead a " godly, righteous, and ſober life," make a ſecret vow in your own breaſts, to put forth every endeavour yourſelves: and remember the conſequence of ſlighting ſuch vows, and made on ſuch an occaſion. If you do not this, you are performing a MOCK WORSHIP, and perhaps it were almoſt as well you had ſtaid away. It muſt not be inferred from this, that you are at liberty to omit this duty; *wilful neglect*, when we have opportunity, is an inexcuſable crime.

The miniſter, indeed, reads you a form of abſolution, but this is of no avail to *the purging away of ſin*;—it is a bare declaration, " That he (that is, GOD) pardoneth and abſolveth all them that *truly repent*," and that is ſhewn, when " the reſt of our life proves

proves pure and holy."—You can, therefore, look for pardon on no other conditions that what I at firſt remarked, namely, a ſincere, practical repentance, that is, an immediate reformation of your lives.

Let the ſame pious ſpirit be continued through the reſt of the prayers; that, when you aſk for good things at the hand of GOD, you ſincerely reſolve to uſe your own endeavours to merit them; and, when you repeat the general thankſgiving, let it be as if you really felt how unworthy you are, and how grateful for the many bleſſings you enjoy. Among the reſt, take care not to forget thoſe which are extended to you by this very excellent and benevolent inſtitution. Take care not to forget, that many of you have been delivered out of the very jaws of death, by the goodneſs of Providence, and the charitable interference of the humane. That the all-powerful arm, which has once afflicted you, may do ſo again; but that to ſecure his favour, is to ſecure life, happineſs, and every thing deſirable.

deſirable. May the ſame means, that have reſcued you from temporal death, reſcue you from the *death of ſin*, by impreſſing you with a juſt idea of what you are, and what you ought to be! — While you are thankful for theſe bleſſings, let the firſt-fruits of your increaſing goodneſs be ſhewn in a temperate and uniform obedience to the rules and regulations of the houſe, and to thoſe who exerciſe authority in it for your benefit; and in a cheerful compliance with whatever means the ſkilful perſons, who beſtow their care and attendance upon you, ſhall judge conducive to your recovery. —And may GOD give you grace ſo to take both his viſitations and bleſſings, that you may live to his glory and your own happineſs, and that you may inherit life everlaſting, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!

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THE END.

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